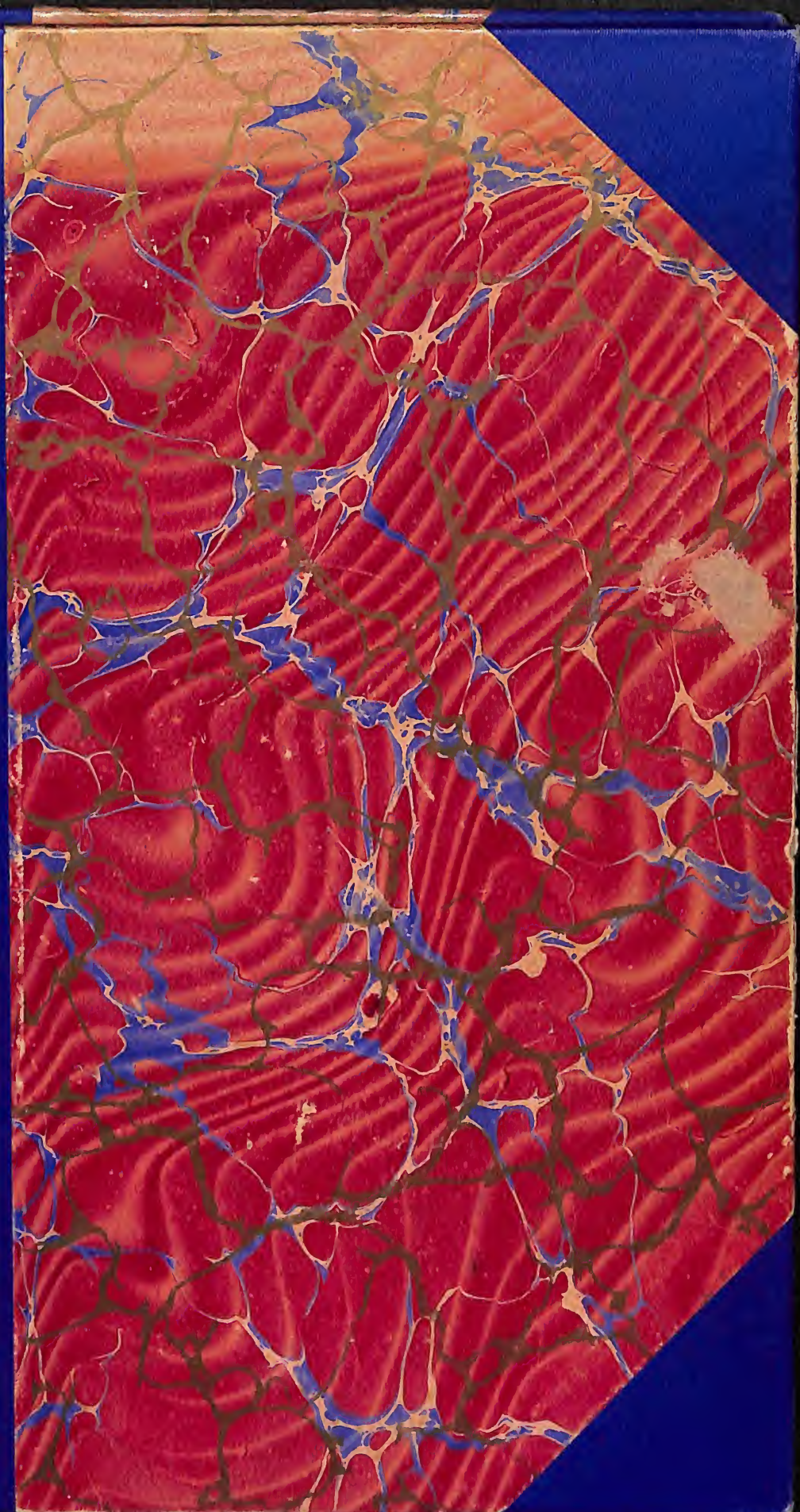


FOR
THE SAKE
OF A
NAME



Hazel Campbell,

Xmas 1905-

From Auntie Hetta

FOR THE SAKE OF A NAME.

A STORY FOR OUR TIMES.

BY ELIZABETH GRINNELL,

Author of "How John and I Brought Up the Child," "John and I and the Church,"
"Our Feathered Friends," etc.

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PREFACE.

BY THIS story it is hoped to show how really near to each other are rich and poor, country folk and city folk, employers and employed, if only a sympathetic interest in the daily life of others fills each heart. Kindly thoughts, though simple, are not wasted. Love even for the unlovely is not wasted. Unmarketable harvests need not be wasted even though it be a poor year. Deep Gutter neighbor-

hoods in the large cities may become the point of greatest interest to those who for reasons of poor health are advised to try "change of scene." Poor boys and girls and older folk may sympathize with the lonely rich if they stop to give the matter a thought. All are in sore need of something, and poverty has no exclusive patent on misery.

ELIZABETH GRINNELL.

FOR THE SAKE OF A NAME.

CHAPTER I.

A FUNERAL IN DEEP GUTTER NEIGHBORHOOD.

MOSTLY the funerals come to pass in the last chapter of a story. Not so in the tale I am about to tell. "From death springs life" is a law of Nature. Not so very different is the law of grace. But to go on with the story.

Paul Silver, Funeral Director by profession, also superintendent of Deep Gutter Sunday-school, motioned to the pall-bearers to stop.

"Better take it around to the side

door," he whispered to John Silent, chief pall-bearer and also assistant superintendent of the Sunday-school.

Accordingly the small casket was taken around to the side door of the little chapel. The chapel itself had the appearance of having been made over from some previous condition or position in society, an appearance which became it, as being "made over" oftentimes becomes a human heart. There was a sort of lean-to in the rear of the building and connected with it, which lean-to was the chapel kitchen. The kitchen door and

window were closed. We will wait until there is some occasion to open them, to know why this particular made-over chapel in the poor heart of a great city, was provided with a lean-to kitchen.

The crowd was less dense at the side door than at the front. The crowd parted with a sad stare upon its eager face, to let the casket pass in over the two board steps at the entrance, and then closed again, with the sad stare deepening.

The casket was deposited in front of the desk or platform of the little room, in the lap of two pine chairs placed there and guarded from previous occupation by the keeper of a ten-cent restaurant in the neighborhood who had been appointed to that duty.

The pall-bearers stood wiping the perspiration from their uncovered foreheads. There being no seats reserved for them, they sat down upon the margin of the low platform facing the casket and the congregation. The appearance of the casket was usual enough. Not so the congregation composing the funeral. It was like the collection of "four-footed beasts, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air," let down to Peter in the vision at Joppa. That is, it was like that collection figuratively speaking. There were really some of all sorts, both clean and unclean.

One had but to observe closely to note that some of these sat or stood with a meaching, dispirited cast of countenance, as if they were actually on all fours, browsing in a dry pasture, and could not or would not turn their eyes heavenward. Others were wild-eyed, casting about them furtively, as if to run away, and wonder-

ing how "in the name of Cæsar" they ever chanced to be inside of chapel walls. If they had been inclined to question further they would have remembered that it was by a greater Name than Cæsar's that they happened to be there. Others looked about them with cunning glance, speculative, scheming how best to set their snares without notifying their possible victims, this being the daily occupation of these, and they could not desist even at a funeral.

There were others still who were like the fowls of the air, ascending in flight, or believing themselves to be ascending, spurning the contamination of the neighborhood, presumably, yet with dust upon their feet, figuratively speaking again.

This congregation, perhaps a hundred and fifty of them, stood and sat densely packed in and about the chapel, each and all wiping the moisture from their visages, thereby soiling their various handkerchiefs, but cleaning their oft-times grimy faces, the perspiration acting as a sort of philanthropist in the matter of cleaning up to those who had failed to perform this duty beforehand.

It was a hot day; as hot a day as ever comes to the poor heart of a great city in mid-August. The ten-cent-restaurant keeper, who had reserved the two chairs for the silent occupant, finding no seat for himself, took to his heels. That is, he sat or squatted in what little space had not been pre-empted near the casket. The undertaker, who was also the preacher of the occasion, stood behind the desk. From his face there beamed an indescribable light such as few wear, he being gifted by nature with a perpetual smile

without seeming intention, or relaxation of the muscles; and by grace with something akin to the same; said smile having in it not levity nor witless mirth, but a peaceful assurance of cheer from depths unfailling.

Everybody around Deep Gutter, and in fact in the whole of Silver City, knew, or thought they knew, Paul Silver, Undertaker and Funeral Director; no great personage, to be sure, as men count greatness, but quite worth one's while to be acquainted with. He was also a City Director of two terms' standing.

His taking his place behind the desk was the signal for the undertone of whisper and rustle and sly push of chairs to cease; but the fanning went on, also the wiping of the perspiration. Mothers hugged their hot little babies to their breasts as if that would cool them, and smothered their cries in such folds of calico or faded black alpaca as the wearable resources at hand supplied. Restless children were noiselessly shaken into sobbing quiet, while the few curs that had wandered into the room with the rest of the congregation, left, with suppressed whines at sudden intimations from toe tips.

The preacher began, opening the Book and laying it upon the face of the desk before him, reading from Psalm 79: "According to the greatness of Thy power preserve Thou those that are appointed to die; so we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks forever, we will show forth thy praise to all generations."

"This boy who was with us yesterday has died. There is an adversary who de-

lights in death and tears and a cutting-off of what might be a long and useful life. There is a Friend who preserves even in death, and keeps alive the memory of those who are suddenly silent. It is our duty to help this Friend preserve the dead by giving praise forever, for we are the sheep of his pasture."

"Pretty poor pasture, preacher!" came from the ten-cent-restaurant keeper squatting upon his heels on the floor in front.

The preacher paused and went on. "Yes, my friend, it is a rather poor pasture around Deep Gutter; I admit that, if you look at the lack of some things, such as good clothes, sugar on bread and butter, and china to eat from; but we are improving in these, aren't we, Mr. O'Shay?"

The man thus addressed, appreciating the "Mr." to his name, supplied right before a great congregation who mostly dubbed him "Pat," acquiesced that it was improving.

"It is His pasture, if it is poor, and we must do the best we can to make it better by hard work and self-denial, digging deep and sowing fresh seed; the deep digging and the fresh sowing insuring plenty of water and good bread by and by. Now let us do what we can to help God 'preserve' this boy according to his promise. The pitiless engine that crushed him had no power over the character in him. Iron rails and iron wheels coming together with hasty cruelty of intention cannot touch that part of a man which the Almighty Father would have us help him preserve. They cannot touch that, by so much as its outer rim, any more than you can touch the sun at midday when it

shines straight down into the street. When a man or boy or woman dies, the best or worst part of what lived is yet alive. Bob Green was a poor, homeless, awkward boy, who lived with whom he could, and helped whom he could. But he was a good boy."

"Yes, yes, he was a good boy!" came from the middle row of chairs; "he never stole anything, and he helped me empty my tub ever so many times, making believe he happened along, when all the while I knew he came on purpose."

"And he toted Cripple Johnnie all around down to the circus grounds!" came from another quarter of the room.

"And he washed the cup at the pump hisself every time he went by!" came from Dick Davis at the rear of the congregation; "and he hung that there looking-glass on the pump so's we could see ourselves, he said, and know when our faces was dirty."

"Bob Green never licked a feller!" came from a small urchin who looked himself as if he had been "licked" all his life; "and he always separated the kids."

"And when my baby died he made the coffin hisself out o' cracker boxes, and painted it, and lined it with a piller-case old Nancy Roach give him — all because he said he loved the baby and wouldn't have no charity funeral nor nothing." This testimony came from a woman in black who immediately took to crying audibly, not so much for Bob, as for the baby who had been buried in the cracker-box coffin.

"This is right," said the preacher, after waiting a few minutes for the subsidence of the crying, which had become univer-

sal. "We are 'preserving' this boy, as is the will of God in the case, by remembering all these things which did not die with his body, they being of so much greater value than the body. From what you have testified, we find that Bob Green bore another's heavy burdens when he lifted the tired woman's wash-tub to save her the trouble. And he was kind, being of a strong back himself, and having compassion for Cripple Johnnie. When Cripple Johnnie meets Bob in heaven, as we almost know he will, he will say to the angels, 'That big boy there gave me his legs when we lived in Deep Gutter neighborhood, and I'm glad you've given him some wings now.'"

A little fellow sitting on a window-sill holding a crutch in one hand, grinned broadly and then broke into a fit of crying right in the face of the grin; though why he should have done both at one and the same time he couldn't have told for the life of him, any more than any other person can give the reason for like action at certain memorable times in life. He had not understood till then, that Bob Green was dear to him in any sense whatever. As for the "angels" which the preacher had alluded to, he had never given them a thought in his life, being all the time taken up with his own aching back and the hopelessness of his future. Henceforth his solitary moments would be occupied with thoughts of angels and of the speeches he would have ready to make to them, not only about Bob Green, but about some other people. He was conscious of having had a "lift" somehow, as people are conscious who entertain angels for the first time in their lives.

“Bob washed the cup every time he went by,” said the preacher. “That was a good deed. It was a little communion service, a remembering of the next who should come along; it was as if he were crying, ‘Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;’ and here is a clean cup, too. Bob Green was a preacher when he washed that cup; and he was a peacemaker, it seems. He ‘never licked the boys,’ but ‘separated the kids.’ Bob Green was not one to stand by and see a little fellow get the worst of it physically; and the big fellow get the worst of it mentally, knowing that he would be a bigger tyrant and a meaner one next time. And when the baby died he made a little coffin for it out of the best lumber he could lay his poor hands on, because he loved the baby and didn’t want to see it have a charity funeral. Bless Bob Green’s memory! He will not die. It is only his flesh that lies here, but flesh that is very dear to us, and Bob shall have no charity funeral. Love shall bury Bob Green, as surely as love buried Moses or Paul or Stephen. And now I have a little testimony for myself on account of Bob, or rather for God, which I want to bear. Bob, as you know, being a very dear friend of mine, was given to confiding his secrets to me.”

There was a rustle of expectation and a hushing of the restless babies, and a lull in the fanning. Cripple Johnnie ceased to swing his heels against the wall underneath the window-sill where he was sitting, and looked with all the intentness of his great blue eyes.

“Last Sabbath after the Sunday-school was out and you had all gone home, Bob

came to me wiping his eyes on his shirt sleeve (I had just seen him give his handkerchief to Dick Davis), and Bob said in a broken way, as if he were swallowing hard, ‘Mr. Silver, I’d like to do something for God if you’ll show me how.’ Monday the engine ran over Bob, and Tuesday we are at his funeral. That little wish in Bob’s heart made him a brother to Isaiah the prophet and St. John and Martin Luther and all the saints and martyrs who have lived and died; yes, and of Jesus Christ himself. Do you think it’s a poor pasture around Deep Gutter, Mr. O’Shay, when a homeless boy’s soul can grow as great as Luther’s or St. Paul’s or one of the prophets’ ever did in a given time? ‘I’d like to do something for God’ were the last words I ever heard Bob Green say, and they were written down in heaven, so the people that live there will know what sort of a character Bob Green had when he lived in Deep Gutter neighborhood in Silver City.”

After this there was a prayer, a thanking of God that he had made it possible for Bob Green to have so many friends when he came to die, and a singing of the hymn “One more day’s work for Jesus,” and then the people watched the casket while it was placed tenderly in as good a hearse as ever was seen in Silver City, the hearse and all the belongings being the property of none other than Paul Silver.

As it passed the window where lived the woman whose tub Bob had emptied, “coming that way on purpose,” a hasty, work-worn hand snatched a scarlet geranium from its stiff, straight stem in the pot and laid the gay flower lovingly on the

projecting margin of the hearse, as close to the head of the coffin within it as possible. There it lay, a silent, unheard thing, but a thing that bore testimony nevertheless to Bob Green's character.

"Strange," the woman said to her next neighbor, "strange, little things do take hold of a person so. I can't help crying, and all because Bob Green emptied my tub for me when I was that tired I could not stand. And Mr. Silver, he says that's being like a Christian."

"I know something else he done," chimed in the neighbor, "and it wasn't mentioned to the funeral neither, 'cause the folks he done it to moved away. He walked clear out into the country every morning one summer at three o'clock, before anybody was up, just to get milk for the baby that had rickets. I s'pose there's lots of other things he done that we don't know about, he not being given to talking, and dead now anyway. I'm sorry he's dead."

CHAPTER II.

SOME EAVESDROPPERS IN THE CEMETERY.

IN THE meantime the small coffin was placed in its cosy niche in the bosom of Mother Earth, and Paul Silver had said good-by to the few attendants who had assisted him in these last rites to Bob Green, Sunday-school pupil of six-months standing or thereabouts in Deep Gutter chapel. Then he sat down on a rustic seat under a willow, and remembered what this cemetery was like ten years before, when he had come to Appleville a stranger. Appleville was Silver City in

embryo then, and this very cemetery was a country graveyard with its two dozen unkempt graves, over which cows wandered in search of food, be it clover or blackberry vines. The fence, at that early time, lay on its weather-beaten face mostly, and it was viewed as having no particular use in the world unless it be a very slight impediment to public travel. Every year the sumach leaves had blushed crimson at the neglect of things, until he, Paul Silver, and his friend Philip Silent (Philip Silent having been, at this writing, three years under the sod) had taken pity on God's Acre and made mends and amends.

The young man turned towards a green mound, above which a piece of plain granite bore the inscription "Philip Silent," and thought of his friend who, like many another, had laid down his armor in his youth, having outgrown the compass of his somewhat inadequate body.

"Oh, Philip! Philip!" he thought, "had you but lived a little longer to teach us better how to work those works that do follow you!" Then in the sweltering heat of that August day, the man knelt on the greensward and commended the inhabitants of Deep Gutter to the care of Him whose people they were.

A click of the gate latch and Paul Silver turned to see his friend William Christy, superintendent of the city schools. Under the willow the two friends knelt, oblivious to the fact that a couple of "gamins" from Deep Gutter neighborhood were peeping over the fence at them from the north side. Not that Paul Silver or William Christy ever called any mischievous boys or street urchins

"gamins." Not at all. They would sooner have called them "little brothers."

"Guess they're prayin'," said Pete to Dick. "Say, Pete, there must be some-thin' in it. It's like playin' a game of some sort, as if they wanted to get the better of somebody. See 'em shut their eyes as if they was playin' blind-man's-buff without any blinders on. Wish we could hear what 'tis they're sayin'!"

"Wish we could!" answered Pete, with a twinkle in his roguish eyes. If Pete could slip up behind these two men at their prayers, it would be almost as good as slipping up behind a policeman. "Let's sneak round behind 'em and come up close under cover of them gravestones and listen."

Dick acquiesced. It was no great feat for the two boys to creep up to the location named, for they were barefoot, and used to skulking. Indeed, to skulk was their chief pleasure in life, and they could see no difference between skulking behind an Italian toy-vender in Deep Gutter neighborhood and slipping up behind the superintendent of the city schools and the undertaker.

Grinning from ear to ear and trembling with suppressed excitement at thought of their prowess, and the possibilities of what they might be going to hear, the two boys took their stand behind the broken granite slab inscribed "Philip Silent."

The friends, the young men who were kneeling on the green carpet, spoke no word for some time, and the eavesdroppers were tiptoeing away, chagrined at their



The young men kneeled on the green carpet.

defeat in hearing something to their advantage, when Pete, lingering, signaled to Dick to stop.

"I heard something, didn't you?"

Sure enough, he did hear something, and it was this:

"Our heavenly Father, here by the grave of one who was so consecrated to thee that he could not bear longer separation from thee, we kneel and consecrate ourselves even as he was consecrated. Bless thy work in Deep Gutter and everywhere, and bring the boys and girls and men and women to a life of simple effort for others and themselves. For Jesus' sake."

"Amen!" came from the other. And the two boys, scared at the possibility of being caught eavesdropping in so peculiar a place, scampered off as fast as their legs could carry them, making a great noise and not stopping to look behind. They expected to be pursued, as usual, and great was their disappointment, on clearing the cemetery bounds and looking back breathless, to see the victims of their curiosity still sitting under the willow, oblivious to the recent presence of intruders.

It mattered not to Paul Silver and William Christy, the coming or going of these children. They brushed the dandelion-down from their knees and sat on the bench. They recalled old times, before "the boom" had made Silver City out of Appleville, bringing with it, as booms will bring with them, something of good and evil, desirable and undesirable things. Deep Gutter neighborhood, the especial mission field of these two at present, was recalled as having been "the bog" once on a time, in Dr. Silent's pasture, deriving its name ultimately from the fact that in grading the streets and alleys through a certain portion of this bog, too deep a gutter had been plowed and cobbled and the city had never made it right.

This gutter became the playground of

all the children in the vicinity and other unpromising vicinities around. When it rained, a torrent of considerable depth and fury swept the entire length, in which little boats were made to glide, going to pieces, it must be admitted, against the sharp sides of rock, and frequently coming to anchor where the gully joined the city outfall a mile away. When it did not rain the gutter was the recipient of various contributions by way of paper and cigars and rags and trash of all sorts, wherein fished the children of the neighborhood for treasures such as pictures, and cigar stumps wherewith to create appetites and habits. That is, the gutter contained and held fast all these, until such irregular periods as the city authorities ordered a clearing up. At such times there was a look of dismay on the faces of the children, who forthwith snatched such particles of treasure as they could, for the purpose of starting a fresh fund of trash when the street cleaners should have departed.

The two friends sitting under the willow gave less time to thinking about the gutter proper, than about the people who bordered the gutter and whom they loved with something—a little, to be sure, but something—of that love wherewith Christ had loved them. They saw in every one of these, self-helpless but redeemable characters. They remembered their friend, the crippled Philip Silent, who, when alive and present with them, spent all of his time in "planting efforts," forgetting the weakness of his misshapen body that he might shape souls and hearts after the Holy Pattern. It was right through the neighborhood of Deep Gutter that Philip

had spent nearly a whole summer with the railroad gang, teaching them to sing, and, singing, to believe, until the railroad ties were laid to the tune of "Jesus, I my cross have taken." With Philip Silent for engineer, Bill Mushrush, the railroad foreman, had gone on his way to build railroads for Christ, and the superficial could not see in the rails and ties that laid athwart one another, the Cross of Jesus stretching over the heart of the city and country. Bill Mushrush had gone on his way, and Philip Silent had gone on his way, and there lay the railroad going its way under the viaducts and across the streets making its holy sign. And here under the willow sat the two friends praying for the entertainment of Pete and Dick, though they did not know Pete and Dick were entertained, and plotting, in company with their prayers, for the happiness and usefulness of Pete and Dick and all the rest. Indeed, "plotting," in a sort of able and affectionate way for the saving of people, had come to be a habit of these two men. And the habit was growing, just as habits of any kind or sort are bound to grow.

The boys, at a safe distance from their recent scene of action, threw themselves down in the timothy grass and panted, and dug out grass roots with their stubby, grimy fingers, and speculated.

"My! it's hot!" said Pete. "Say, Dick, what did he mean by bringing the boys and girls in Deep Gutter to a life of simple effort for themselves and others?"

"Why, Pete, don't you know what effort means? It's just tryin', you know, real hard-like, to 'do somethin'. We was makin' an effort just now to get away

from the graveyard for fear we'd be caught."

"Well, what do you s'pose them men pray for us where we live for? I never heard any of the folks in Deep Gutter prayin' for the people up their way."

"No, but they ought to. There's lots of folks up there that ought to be prayed for. Take that old miser, for instance, that rides down our way sometimes just to amuse hisself and poke his nose into our business. He ought to be prayed for, sure."

"He ain't old; not more'n fifty anyway. What made you think he's old?"

"'Cause he's rich and stuck-up and looks down on folks. Say, Dick, let's sneak up to his place some night and look around. No more'n fair. He was to the funeral this afternoon."

"No; was he?"

"Yes, he was there; I see him, 'way back by the door behind the post. He was sweatin' as bad as any of us, and I thought once I see him wipe his eyes as if he was cryin', though of course 'twas sweat. Folks like him don't cry, unless they cry for more money or bigger houses."

"No, they don't," said the other. "But them two up in the graveyard cries; I see 'em. I don't see what great, strong men like them find to cry about neither. They're as rich as the old miser, for all I know, but they're different. That undertaker-Sunday-school-superintendent don't look as though he ought to cry neither. He's always laughin', or just goin' to laugh even when he's cryin'. And 'tain't laughin', neither. Queer chap, ain't he?"

"That he is. Let's go home. I feel a

gnawin' in my stomach, and mother promised us somethin' good for supper if we'd be good to the funeral so's she could have some peace."

Then the two boys ran and jumped by turns for a mile, bobbing their heads under the cool water of the fountain when they reached Deep Gutter, and squirting water from between their teeth all over the ground until a good part of the street was sprinkled, for which public benefaction the city authorities ought to have paid them, but that matter was overlooked.

After the street-sprinkling, the two boys took turns at looking in the little brass-framed mirror which Bob Green had chained to the pump before he died, and then they ran off to satisfy the "gnawin'" at their stomachs.

CHAPTER III.

ALFRED SLOCOMB WOULD LIKE TO BE PRESERVED.

THE "old miser" referred to by Dick and Pete was no other than Alfred Slocomb, of Mansion Avenue, Silver City. He had attended the funeral, being a man of leisure, and curiosity, and presentiments. It was not the first time he had been inside the little chapel of Deep Gutter neighborhood. To be sure, he went in a very quiet way, leaving his beautiful carriage and its driver on the corner of the next street. Once in the chapel, it was his custom to remain behind some obstacle, as the post or half-open door. This was very remarkable conduct in a man of Alfred Slocomb's

caliber. He was not naturally timid, being very much the opposite for his whole life. That is, he had not been timid before. Why he appeared to be so at this particular time or thereabouts, it is difficult to tell. I am inclined to the opinion that a new idea was taking possession of his heart, being put there by some invisible but friendly hand sometime in the night when it was dark and he was not attending strictly to his business of money-making.

Driving home after the funeral, he went directly to his home office and locked the door. Why he locked the door does not appear, unless it was to keep in a certain thought which was in him and which he did not wish to have run away, as thoughts do sometimes run away at the approach of people whose breasts the thought is not in. "If I should die," Alfred Slocomb was thinking, "if an iron horse should run over me to-morrow when I am coming home from the office, could anyone remember that I ever helped a cripple walk, or ever lifted a washerwoman's tub, or ever brought milk for a rickety baby, or ever made a cup clean for dirty mouths to drink from, or ever separated the kids when they were fighting, whether they happened to live in Mansion Avenue or Deep Gutter neighborhood? Is there anything I ever did or said that could introduce me in heaven if I got inside the door by some mistake? Did I ever do one thing in this world for which people would 'preserve' me after I was dead?"

"No, Alfred Slocomb, you never did as much for your kind, rich and great as you are, as that poor, homeless Bob Green

did for his neighbors." This answer came from somewhere, though there was nobody but the one man in the room and the door was locked and the walls were very thick, as mansion walls are made.

Straightway, Alfred Slocomb arose and ordered his carriage. He drove to a business block in Main Street, and alighted in front of a building whose plate-glass window bore the inscription in gilt letters, "Paul Silver, Undertaker and Funeral Director." It was not yet dark. The occupant of the office behind the gilt inscription, quite accustomed to seeing carriages drive to the door, came to receive, as he supposed, a request for services in some house of mourning. He was surprised when Alfred Slocomb said to him:

"Mr. Silver, I have come to see what I can do for you, or rather for the people in Deep Gutter neighborhood. I have been interested in your work there. It seems to me something novel and peculiar. And the people, the residents of the place, are interesting. They seem to have feeling, you know. Don't you need money—that is, more money than you have in the treasury?"

Paul Silver laughed in his heart at the thought of there being money in the treasury, and then he remembered that the real treasury, the source from which supplies were drawn for the work, was inexhaustible.

"Yes, yes, we need money," was his answer. "We need more kitchen room and some supplies for the classes, especially in the natural history class."

"First let me ask you, Mr. Silver," said the stranger, "do you expect to die soon? Is there any hereditary taint or presenti-

ment of the end in your mind? Excuse me for asking, but I had my suspicions that such might be the case."

Mr. Silver looked surprised, and in the presence of any other stranger would no doubt have laughed merrily. As it was, Mr. Slocomb was so serious, so very much in earnest, that Paul Silver replied:

"Why, no, Mr. Slocomb, there is no family taint in my history that I am aware of. I belong to what is considered long-lived and healthy stock, and I have no premonitions of death. Why do you ask?"

"I have been watching you, studying your course for a few months, being ordered by my physician to a change of scene, and this watching you and your field of action in Deep Gutter is an emphatic change of scene. I have studied you as I would a new business enterprise which I might myself embark in, were I sure of its soundness and final outcome. And I wondered what possible motives actuate your conduct among the poor and ill-bred in the neighborhood of Deep Gutter, thinking that possibly you were 'packing to go,' as it were; that is, getting ready to die or something. Excuse me, do! My motives in thus questioning you are sincere."

"And what if I were packing up to go?" Paul Silver asked; "have you any suggestions, or guide book, or money to loan me for the trip?" alluding to the previous question of Mr. Slocomb's in regard to money.

"Yes, I've got money, plenty of it, which I am more than willing to exchange for your motives. Here's a check for a thousand. I'll make it over to you,"

turning to the desk. "You do not look like a man with a presentiment, nor as if you would die soon; but you do look like a man with a purpose. Give your purpose to me."

"You have purposes of your own," answered Mr. Silver. "You intimate that you are rich and can give money. You must have had purposes, to work so hard all your life. Perhaps your purposes are exhausted or deteriorated. And you have presentiments."

"Both, sincerely; and that is why I must borrow or buy your motives. I have a secret — that is, Dr. Silent and I have a secret — an unpleasant, unwelcome one. I am to die of fatty degeneration of the heart some day, perhaps soon, perhaps later. It's a thing to make a man grit his teeth and the cold chills run up his spine. To die, sir! And I should like to be remembered by something I shall have done — 'preserved,' as you called it this afternoon when you were preaching that very peculiar funeral sermon, you and the friends of Bob Green. You see when a man hasn't anything in the world but money and fatty degeneration of the heart, he naturally offers his money, being the only one of the two which anybody would be likely to want, to redeem his soul or his character, whichever needs redeeming the most. My money ought to be sufficient for the purpose, seeing I have given forty years to getting it, when I might have been a philosopher or scientist or missionary or statesman, or any other man with motives, like yourself. Come, give me or sell me your motives."

Paul Silver felt a sudden love for the

man before him, replete as he appeared to be with just the very thing needed most, next to the love of God, in Deep Gutter neighborhood. Not that Deep Gutter had not the love of God already, for it existed by the love of God, and was learning that fact as fast as it possibly could learn it under the trying circumstances. But that did not change the other fact that it also needed money. The undertaker lost his accustomed look of merriment for a moment and threw into his noble face a thought that was half of pain and half of surprise. He said:

"And you think, Mr. Slocumb, that, provided you can have the privilege or distinction of giving money enough to the work in Deep Gutter or elsewhere, you can die with better prospects?"

"Exactly that, Mr. Silver, exactly that! If Bob Green can be remembered and preserved after he died, all because he lifted a tub, or fed a baby, or carried a cripple about, or washed a drinking-cup at the fountain, wouldn't I be remembered and preserved in the same ratio if I fed a hundred babies, and built fountains, and bought wash-tubs that were self-emptying, or wheel-chairs for invalids? It appears that way, and all I want is for you to take the money and spend it. Here's the check — but let me know what's done with it."

Paul Silver looked away from the paper and did not put out his hand to take it. He was listening for the "still small voice" in his soul which was in the habit of speaking to him on points about which there might be some mistake. He valued this man more than he valued his money, though he very much wanted his

money, there being plenty of it; but still he valued the man. If only he might get the man as well as his money for God! he was thinking.

"Mr. Slocomb," he said, "it is love that redeems and meets the wants of Deep Gutter, not gold. Had gold been sufficient, then God would have given gold in the place of love, since the hills that hold the mines are his. And it is love, not gold, that preserves a man after he is dead."

"Oh, I know that!" interrupted Mr. Slocomb. "Of course you believe that God loves the world in a general sense, and I don't deny it. But you misunderstand me. I am not speaking of redeeming anybody or anything but my character or my memory or whatever that part of me may be that feels a longing to be remembered and preserved after I am dead. I want to die as well off as Bob Green did. I envy him. I couldn't help it this afternoon. I want to do something before I die that will embalm me afterwards. I'd like to have people get up at my funeral and tell what I had done, the same as they told what Bob Green had done; only I would like what I do to be very valuable telling, commensurate with my wealth and station in life. No need of being economical or close-fisted when it comes to that."

"My friend," Mr. Silver replied, "Bob Green hadn't a thought of his character nor of his possible memory after he was dead, when he said to me last Sunday, 'I want to do something for God.' God took him by way of the iron horse while the words were warm on his lips and the wish was warm in his heart, and before he had

time to more than put his desire into words. Though Bob had been doing something for God a good while, as you saw. There was love for God behind that wish of Bob's; and the love, not the deeds, was what preserved him. You might buy tubs, and crutches, and invalid chairs, and bury paupers in grand style; it wouldn't count for anything in the matter of preserving you, without that other thing that cannot be bartered for. I couldn't touch your money, much as I want it. It would be like promising you something impossible for anybody to give, or you to possess, under the present circumstances. You would be disappointed in the outcome. You would get no returns, and would be out your money. Better the love of one poor heart, like that of Bob Green made manifest in Deep Gutter, than spend five thousand of your money expecting the same results. If you would buy a character, or have your memory honored wholly and solely for your money, there are ways. And there are financiers to direct the ways. My co-workers and I in Deep Gutter have dealings with love, not gold; though where gold ministers to love or is borne in love's hand, it is one and the same."

It was like Paul Silver to speak as he was speaking to this man. It was for Christ's sake, and he felt no false fear of hurting or offending. He had seen Mr. Slocomb, and noted his manner in and about the chapel, now and then speaking with him but never seeking him. Paul Silver was prudent. He would delay where another more impulsive would rush in and repel. Such men as Mr. Slocomb are better left to their thoughts, especially

when there is something going on in the thoughts which is bound to work itself out to the surface. The man had station and money and physical ability, and moral responsibility for all of these. He was intelligent, so also was Paul Silver; but Paul Silver's intelligence was sanctified or perfected by a thing or element foreign to that of Mr. Slocomb's.

Mr. Slocomb felt this while he stood looking at the undertaker, creasing the check in his fat hand and perspiring with the heat and his thoughts. The man was not offended. Offense is for insincerity or vanity, and Mr. Slocomb had neither. Nor was he affected. He was sincere in his wish to do something by which he might be counted righteous after he was dead. To be precisely just to the man, there was a certain undefined something behind the wish which he himself did not understand, being a stranger to that sort of speech which the undefined something was making itself known by. Paul Silver recognized this, and his desire for this man grew into a prayer.

"So you refuse my money?" Mr. Slocomb said, turning to go and putting the check into his hip pocket.

"Yes; only the Lord's money can be used in the Lord's work."

"Why, this I am offering you is the Lord's money, man! You say that the hills and mines are his. Take it!"

"Yes, but you have not been getting it nor saving it for him. You have been getting it for yourself, and keeping it for yourself, and he knows it. If it were not for fatty degeneration of the heart, which sometimes precedes softening of the heart or a making of it new, you would be now

this minute getting more money for no purpose. You are weighted down with gold, and you are afraid of it because it is an inanimate thing and cannot speak a word wherewith to preserve you after you are dead. You are seeking to get rid of the money now for self-preservation, not for the sake of those who need it in Deep Gutter. Deep Gutter wouldn't touch your gold if they knew what your intentions are in giving it. It would rather have a penny of Bob Green's than your thousands; that is, Mr. Slocomb, Bob's money would buy more than your thousands when it came to certain supplies which you consider necessary after death. Don't worry as to how you are to be preserved after you die, Mr. Slocomb. I am sure Bob Green never thought of that."

Paul Silver found himself talking to this rich man about Bob as if Bob had been of equal station. But why shouldn't he, since Mr. Slocomb had admitted his envy of Bob? This Undertaker and Funeral Director, accustomed to the mysteries of human anatomy, blessed God in his heart that some servant of his had discovered the particular malady which was driving this man to think, and, discovering it, had so demonstrated the same that, should a victim of it become aware of its presence, he might be driven to purposes and desires and disappointment and resolve.

The room inside, as indeed every room inside of all houses on that August day, was intolerably warm, especially for a man who was forced to pocket a check for a thousand when he wished to give it away, and the two stepped outside, fanning their faces with their hats. The groom on the

carriage box slipped into his pocket a little Book which caught the eye of Mr. Silver, he recognizing the cover and being perfectly familiar with the tone of it. It was a Book which could have guided the master in the art of being "preserved" had he taken the trouble to ask the groom for the loan of it. Paul Silver thought within himself, "The rich man holds the reins, while the poor man rides inside."

"Better give it a second thought," Mr. Slocumb said as he went down the steps.

"Good-evening," was the reply, and Mr. Silver went back into the close office. And for what did he step behind the safe in a little corner just at that moment, if not to enter into a little communion with the Giver of all wisdom? Paul Silver's character was unimpeachable, he never having given a thought to his character, and he did not care that his visitor had departed in possible anger. The anger of a man at wry with his best interests could not affect another man whose soul was centering in the one thought of how to bring that other man into harmony with his best interests. Paul Silver's interview with the Giver of all wisdom behind his office safe assured him that Alfred Slocumb and every other man who might be afflicted with "premonitions" was on the road to preservation, provided only they should persevere.

CHAPTER IV.

BUT HE FINDS DIFFICULTIES IN HIS PATH.

THE unrest which had been working within the rich man's mind went right on without interruption, accelerated

perhaps by the recent words in the undertaker's office, and by the new trend which his thoughts were taking.

"So all my money couldn't buy me as decent a funeral as Bob Green had! We'll see about that." And then Mr. Slocumb found himself suddenly envious of Paul Silver. "What does an undertaker know about men's souls, I should like to know! Maybe he thinks he has located the soul with his little bodkin or needle, probing about to find veins. I'm afraid he's found mine."

A knock at his door and a message to the effect that "new enterprises in the far West were booming," brought no thrill to the man's nerves, as such messages usually brought. He had fatty degeneration of the heart now to deal with, and preservation after death, and an undertaker who had assured him that this last was impossible from present indications. He laid the paper down with a sigh.

Alfred Slocumb had started on a new journey; in short, was too well under way to heed voices from a back station. He felt impelled to do something and to do it quick; and besides, he would show Paul Silver, sitting among his doleful coffins, that he was wrong in the matter of Deep Gutter refusing his money if he should run the risk of offering it to them through some other channel in any quantity.

He went out and ordered the carriage again, the astonished but patient groom hastening to obey. Had he not just taken out the horses, spoken kind words to them and fed them their supper, as a Christian groom should do? Their supper could wait in the stalls, but their master and his could not wait. "He is sick," the groom

said to himself, "and is going to the doctor's." And so he was, but not to seek medical advice.

Alfred Slocomb remembered seeing a young man about the chapel with Mr. Silver, an earnest, very thoughtful young man, presumably a comrade and co-worker of the undertaker's. He knew the young man to be a son of Dr. Silent, his own physician. He smiled to himself. "I will go and offer him my money. He will take it. He is not so cautious or suspicious as his friend. A young man like him, with his heart in his work, will not refuse my money;" and he patted the check in his hip pocket.

Alfred Slocomb was intent upon the thing denied him. There never had been anything denied him before, nothing that money could buy—and money had bought everything he had wanted until now. He found John Silent at home.

"Young man," he said, not waiting, "I have seen you in the chapel in Deep Gutter. You are interested in the work and could use more money?"

"Certainly, we could use more money," John replied gladly. "Have you a choice as to what particular use it shall be put?"

"Not at all, not at all!" the other replied eagerly, sure of his success in this new quarter. "I simply want to do something by which I may be remembered after I am gone; have fatty degeneration of the heart, may pass away to somewhere any minute; can't bear the thought of being forgotten; want to be 'preserved,' like Bob Green, you see."

John Silent looked surprised. Something within him, the voice of the Giver

of all wisdom perhaps, whispered "caution."

"Strange sort of a funeral that," Mr. Slocomb went on. "I've attended all kinds and never heard such a sermon. Looks this way to me: If Bob Green, poor, and good-for-nothing, most likely, could be remembered so, just for the simple things he did for his neighbors, couldn't I, if I did a thousand times as much in real money value, be remembered in like ratio? Be 'preserved,' you know, according to the text. I want to know, and I'm in a hurry."

"That is a hard question for me to answer, Mr. Slocomb. That is, it is hard for me to tell you what I think. If you have a thousand times as much love in your heart for God and those poor people as Bob Green had, why then I suppose you might reckon on being remembered or preserved a thousand times as well, provided that were possible."

"What has love to do with my giving of money for any certain purpose, I would like to know?" Mr. Slocomb said impatiently. "I don't ask a sermon on love from you, young man; all I want is for you to take my check for a thousand and apply it where it is most needed. Apply it to my account, mind you, so those people will understand it came from me—my name, and all that; and tell them there's more if they want it. I dread to be forgotten when I am dead, young man. If you live to be my age, and the doctor tells you the outlook for years or months is poor, from his point of view, in fact that you are liable to get a telegram from the skeleton with the scythe at any moment, you may begin to

think it time you did something to 'preserve' yourself, as that young undertaker-preacher would put it."

"I wish you well in any legitimate enterprise, Mr. Slocomb," John Silent replied with deep feeling, "but I cannot take your money with the understanding that I shall guarantee you will be loved after you are dead, or even mentioned, for the giving of it. It wouldn't be strictly honest; for, to tell you the truth, what those people want, and what all helpless people want, the world over, is to be loved; money only comes in as a sort of 'incidental' or 'perquisite,' as the holders of office would say. You cannot buy preservation of your memory after death, in the sense that Bob Green's memory was preserved. We need money bad enough at the Mission, taking the lights and the fires and the kitchen and the Natural History Department and all together, but we want the Lord's money. You have the reputation of being a strictly honest man, sir, in the business world."

"Glad to hear you say it, young man; and it's true, though you intimate that this plan of mine to buy something would not be strictly honest. It is my own money, and I have a right to give it away, especially for a good and benevolent purpose. Come, take it."

"I couldn't take it under the circumstances, Mr. Slocomb. I couldn't, truly. I wish you would go and see Mr. William Christy."

Alfred Slocomb rode away without another word, giving the groom directions to call at the office of the superintendent of public schools. The heat of the day had subsided into the cool of evening,

and he leaned on the cushions with uncovered head, baring his forehead to the light breeze. He had not met with so many difficulties in any undertaking in his life before. He found the superintendent in his office.

"I am in something of a hurry, Mr. Christy," he said, not taking the chair which was offered him. "I feel like donating a part of my income to benevolent purposes, and had thought of the Mission in Deep Gutter neighborhood as being in present need. Could you take my check for a thousand and apply it where you think best? Apply it in my name, you know."

This was sudden to William Christy. He had never before been confronted with a cool check for a thousand of an August evening. Such an amount of money would give the Mission a Chemical Division and add five hundred books to the library. It was a toothsome morsel right in the mouth of Deep Gutter, as it were. But William Christy listened to the Voice which was inaudible to his visitor, but which his visitor could not have understood had he heard it, and the Voice bade him "be prudent." He who had loved Alfred Slocomb all along as He loves every other man whom He has set in the path of life, had His own intentions in the matter, and intimated in a way which was quite familiar to William Christy, as it had been with Paul Silver and John Silent, that he had better not be hasty in accepting the gift. Had it not been for this intimation, it would have been accepted with almost greedy pleasure by each and every one of them. The hint as to this intimation need not surprise any

one, for is it not written "My sheep hear my voice"? Long accustomed, as these three young men had been, to close listening and earnest looking, they could hardly have been deceived even in a dark and wintry night. But this was in mid-August.

"Apply it in your name, did you say, Mr. Slocomb?"

"Yes, sir, apply it in my name — Alfred Slocomb, Esq."

"Whatever we do in Deep Gutter, sir, is done in the name of Jesus."

"Well, do it in the name of Jesus; only, say that I, Alfred Slocomb, made the money honestly and sent it. You see I am afflicted with heart disease — clear case, the doctor says — and I want to do something real good before I die, so I can be remembered and not have my name go out like a candle burned to the candlestick."

"Do I understand that you offer me this sum for the work in the name of Jesus, Mr. Slocomb?"

"Why, no, not exactly that way, Mr. Christy, though I did say you might apply it in any name you choose. What I did say was this: I, Alfred Slocomb, made this and much more money honestly, and I want to apply it where it will do the most good — that is, where it will help somebody to remember me — me, Alfred Slocomb, Mercantile Dealer."

"Mr. Slocomb, I cannot take your gift under the conditions. I should have no heart in applying it. I should all the time be thinking of Alfred Slocomb, Mercantile Dealer, instead of Jesus, in whose name we are working for the Deep Gutter people. You might give your money to

the city; they would appreciate it and turn it to the best account; build a small mausoleum in your memory after you are gone, maybe. Perhaps change the name of the town to Slocomb City. How would that suit you?"

William Christy had scarcely felt how sincere Mr. Slocomb was, or he would not have proposed these stale plans of having the man remembered.

"I could build a mausoleum myself," Mr. Slocomb said, "but that is not what I want. You do not understand. But I will not detain you. Good-evening." And the baffled man re-entered his carriage.

What did it all mean, this defeating of a simple proposition? Surely he was not the first man to wish for friends in the hour of death. Perhaps he had not gone about it in the right way; he would change his course; begin at the beginning, as it were. And yet he did not see what there could have been in the funeral of an insignificant boy, a mere street arab, to take hold of him so. He would put it away from him but that he did not like defeat. And this defeat smacked of preconceived plans on the part of the three friends. He would circumvent them. He would show them that Deep Gutter people would accept money in anybody's name. As he rode, his indignation and pique increased, so that had it been day instead of night he would have driven at once to the neighborhood of his intentions; but that was out of the question, and he went home. He might have known, had he stopped to think, that there must be some principle or deep conviction behind the refusal of the young men.

CHAPTER V.

ALFRED SLOCOMB HAS AN EXPERIENCE
IN DEEP GUTTER.

THE unrest was so lively in the mind of Alfred Slocomb, Esq., that he slept little that night. His groom, in the stable chamber, slept well. But then, the groom had several things to make him sleep that his master did not possess. For instance, the Book was under his pillow, the Book which Paul Silver had caught sight of and recognized the day before. Besides the Book under his pillow, which somehow is a great sedative to those who understand, the groom was at peace with God and the whole world, which his master was not. Alfred Slocomb, tossing away on his hot pillow, realized this fact. He was not at peace either with his own heart nor with his money.

He had always been at peace before; that is, he had not been at sword's points with business or self-satisfaction or enterprises of any sort. He was at war now with each of these, and he resolved to stand stalwart and fight it out. So he arose very early in the morning, finding the young sun almost as hot as it had been the day before, shining clear, without so much as a single gray cloud to screen people beneath it from its fierceness. He ordered the carriage at half-past eight and told the groom to drive to Deep Gutter neighborhood. He left the groom and the carriage at the customary corner and walked on with head erect and careful step, avoiding the trash in the gully as he crossed the street.

There was no check in his pocket this time. In place of the check was gold and

silver which clinked as he walked. It had the sound of a chain, though Alfred Slocomb did not suspect that. It had not occurred to him that fetters may be cast in gold and silver as well as in steel and iron. Yes, the pieces clinked and jingled as he walked along, and the man was pleased. "Nothing like the jingle of money to insure a person a place in the affections of such people as these!" he was thinking.

He looked from side to side, hoping to find the washerwoman who had testified to Bob Green's helpfulness the day of the funeral. Slocomb could remember her face, sharp and shrewd, of the scolding type when roused, but of a tranquil cast in repose. He caught sight of her by the side—the shady side—of her meager little house, wringing great sheets out of the bluing water, and fretting at the cries of a small child at her skirts, grimy and cross and tantalizing from sheer need of its mother's attention.

Eliza Stubbs looked streetward at sound of unfamiliar footsteps and met the figure of Mr. Slocomb. The man turned in at the house-side, and the child quit its crying, hiding itself in its mother's apron in fright. The movement annoyed Slocomb. A suggestion that this reception of him betokened what he might receive from the inhabitants of the neighborhood sent a fresh uneasiness into his mind. He took out a brilliant new quarter and held it towards the little one. "Come, take it!" he said, as he thought, coaxingly; but really there was no assurance in his voice, for the good reason that there was none in his heart.

The child looked at the quarter, drew

down the corners of its mouth, all besmeared as it was with bread and molasses, and screamed at the top of its little lungs. The mother shook it, mortified that it should scream so lustily in the presence of a stranger in broadcloth, not suspecting that her sharp voice was even more odious than the screams of the child.

Alfred Slocomb grew impatient — perhaps the impatience showed in his face — and he hastened to make known the object of his call. “My good woman,” he said, “here is a ten-dollar bill; take it and buy some self-emptying wash-tubs for your use. I am Alfred Slocomb. And here is five dollars; take it and buy the best wringer in the market.”

Eliza Stubbs, washerwoman, drew back, gripping the baby by its arm. “Get away with your money!” she said. “What do I know about Alfred Slocomb? You may be an agent for wash-tubs and wringers, for all I know, and want to get me into a scrape. Your money’s counterfeit, too, as like as not. Get away with it!”

Slocomb’s round face grew rounder. It actually puffed out with humiliation and astonishment. The woman looked what she said, and her visitor backed out of the narrow passage-way. This man had not mingled with people of her class, else he would have been less abrupt. He would have assumed a little sympathy, even though that particular virtue had been entirely wanting in his bosom. Taking hold of the sympathy offered, the woman would have considered the money. There being no introduction to the offer either by personal acquaintance or by sym-

pathy, or the assurance of fellow-feeling, Mr. Slocomb was repulsed.

“What does he take me for?” Eliza Stubbs said to herself while she washed the baby’s face with a corner of a pillow-case in the wash-tub. “I don’t want charity. And he called me ‘my good woman,’ too! I’d rather a person would call me Eliza, or Old Woman Stubbs, or Shrew, as they all do, than to call me ‘my good woman’! It’s tantalizing and shows a person she is looked down upon. My good woman, indeed! No, my good man, I don’t want any of your money! I’d rather have a lift from Bob Green’s hand at my old tubs than all the tubs and wringers your money could buy! I’m no charity woman.”

Walking down the street past open doorways where unkempt babies sprawled on unpainted and carpetless floors, and rolled down bump, thump, over the steps, Alfred Slocomb caught sight of a little figure ahead of him limping on uneven crutches after a tailless dog.

“Hello, little chap!” he called. “Crawl up on my back and I’ll carry you a spell. Want to go anywhere?” This baffled man had been foiled in his offer of money, and now, following partially the example of Bob Green, he would offer his back and his legs. “I’m Alfred Slocomb, of Mansion Avenue. Come, get up!”

Cripple Johnnie looked the distrust which he felt. He would no more have trusted himself on the back of this stranger that he would have mounted the back of the great lion in the circus. “I know!” he said, “you want ter run away with me! You want ter steal me! But you don’t, not if I know myself! Pa! Pa!”

At this call, in the shrill voice peculiar to children of his kind, the tailless dog turned and showed the sharpest canine teeth that Alfred Slocomb had ever looked upon. Its nose wrinkled in longitudinal fissures that trembled and drew in and out like elastic fabric, and the little brute took its stand at its master's right-hand crutch, daring in attitude and defiant.

"Now touch me 'f you dare!" the boy said to Mr. Slocomb. "His name's 'Pa,' and when I holler that, he jumps. 'D you ever know a dog named Pa before, Mister?"

By this time, scurrying from every quarter, there came a rush of children of every description of such as lived in that neighborhood. Bonnetless girls whose hair was bleached in the sun, and boys with every sort of hats on their heads, brims, and crowns, and both combined in tattered adherence. Some had pretty faces and modest manners, led on only by the boldness of the rest. Others were lusty of voice and rude. Heading the crowd were Dick Davis and Pete Mooney.

"Now is my last chance to-day," thought Mr. Slocomb. "Here, children!" he called to the motley gathering, "catch these coins!"

Into the gutter among the trash tinkled a dozen pieces, while rolling down the sidewalk and tilting half hidden in the cracks were as many more. Instantly

there was a scramble. Tow heads and red heads and black heads and white heads bumped against each other and the curbstone in the general effort, and the donor



"Get away with your money!" she said.—See page 20.

of all these coins felt a sudden sense of relief.

When the pieces had all been found and counted and "divied up," for these slum children had a sense of honor in the matter of "divying up" after a scramble, Mr. Slocomb said:

"Do you know who I am, children?"

I am Alfred Slocomb. When you buy something with that money, think of me."

Several of the boys grinned from ear to ear. The girls nudged each other and tittered. Slocomb felt himself growing red again. Had he wasted that money? Those children had it and they evidently were waiting for more, but what good was the giving of it going to do him? How he despised the gamins! "Rough, uncouth, unlovable street arabs!" He could pinch himself for throwing away his money.

Somehow the children took hold of the idea that this man in broadcloth standing with them was despising them. There was not so much as a wish to do anything else than despise them on his transparent countenance.

"Say, Mister, give us some more!" came from Dick Davis, who approached boldly towards the stranger.

"Yes, give us some more," echoed Pete Mooney, taking his stand by his friend Dick.

"Give us all you've got!" shouted the embryo mob in concert.

"Get away, you little rascals!" shouted Slocomb. And he made a dash as if to chase them.

The crowd dispersed, but made faces and impudent signs at him from house corners and alleys. He walked towards a pump on whose rusty elbow swung a tin cup. He took it up. "The very cup," he thought, "that Bob Green used to wash." Mr. Slocomb dipped it in the tank below. The children reappeared.

"Let that there cup alone, Mister!" they called, the boldest of them snatching

it out of his hand. "That there's our cup; let it alone."

Mr. Slocomb glanced hastily into a small, brass-framed mirror that hung by the cup's side. In its bespattered, smooched face he beheld his own, perspiring, red, disgusted with his enterprise, detestation of the whole neighborhood and its uncanny residents.

Suddenly there was a scattering of the small mob. He looked in the direction of their going and saw approaching a short, thin, white-haired old man walking with a stout cane.

There was joy, actual happiness, and consequently beauty, upon every child of them. The old man waited for them to come up.

"How now, my children?" he said affectionately.

"How now, Father Varney?" the children echoed.

"Haven't got much for you this morning," said the old man. "Here, hunt my pockets; maybe there's a dozen apples or something."

Without rudeness the children hunted and found a dozen apples, not enough to go around, but the old man said:

"Never mind, children; gives you a chance to divide. Have you been good since I was here last?"

The children looked sober, and glanced to where Alfred Slocomb was standing. Then they and Father Varney walked on, and Mr. Slocomb could hear no more; he could only see that the old man was followed affectionately and tenderly, and that as many as could took his hands and clung to his arms and even walked behind closely, touching his coat skirt.

"Meals at all hours. Ten cents," Mr. Slocomb read upon the dingy window of a small eating-house. The door stood open and he could see a counter inside with bottles standing on it, and, on shelves behind the counter, plates and cups and saucers. A man, rather greasy of complexion but with a genial countenance withal, was sitting on a high stool behind the counter.

A sudden impulse, prompted by the genial face, led or pushed Mr. Slocomb inside. The flies on the door rose into a cloud at the disturbance of his hand, and swarmed into his face. A whisk from a specked and tattered tissue-paper brush in the hand of the proprietor warned the flies that they had better "retire," which they did as far as the stranger's back, which, in the morning sunshine, offered an inviting surface for ablutions and attention to personal affairs. It mattered not to the flies that it was broadcloth they were on; they went to work cleaning their wings of pie juice and rubbing the sugar off from one foot to the other, and rolling their queer, jointed, round, black heads from side to side in great glee at their good fortune. Alfred Slocomb, perfectly unconscious of what was going on upon his back, addressed the proprietor.

"Do you know who that man is walking down the street with the children — the old man?"

"Why, yes," was the answer. "That's Father Varney, as the children hereabouts call him. They are very fond of him. Have a cocktail, sir, or a gin-and-water?" eying his supposed customer from head to foot and wondering what could have sent

him into his restaurant. Men of his dress and bearing seldom came Monday morning into the department of O'Shay.

Not answering about the drink, but intent on getting the desired information, Mr. Slocomb went on:

"Who is Father Varney? Is he rich?"

"Bless you, no! he's not rich, only comfortable like; guess he gives it all away. Kind old gentleman. Loves the children. Comes often. Children love him. Old folks love him. 'N' I guess God loves him; at least he ought ter. What do you know about him? On his trail?"

"Well, no, not on his trail, and yet I am on his trail, too. Do you know what makes the children love that man, when he hasn't any money to speak of?"

"Oh, he has money, lots of it, I guess; but he don't keep it; he spends it. As fast as he gets it he does one thing and another with it. He's got an old wife and everybody loves her, too. 'Mother Hannah,' the kids call her."

"Well, Mr. O'Shay," continued Mr. Slocomb, reading the name of his host on the wall, traced with red ink against a grimy white background, "what do you know about this Mission and the men and women that conduct it for the entertainment of Deep Gutter folk?"

"Why, I don't know much about it. The chapel used to be a school-house out in the country, but 'twas moved in here by the owner, Dr. Silent, whose young folks carry on the Natural History Department and help in the Sunday-school. That lean-to kitchen is open all winter for anybody that's poor and can't buy coal, to come and cook their victuals in. There's a great range in there. Mrs. Christy, the

wife of the superintendent of public schools—a mighty nice lady, sir,—comes and gives the women lessons in cooking sometimes, all about how to make vegetable soup out of ten cents, and delicious bean porridge out of five cents. Kind of opposition to my restaurant, sir;” and O’Shay clapped his sticky hands on the broad side of his pantaloons and shook with laughter.

“And do the children down here show her any impertinence? Do they make it unpleasant in any way for her?”

“Well, I should smile!” was the answer. “Why, man, there isn’t a kid of ’em but would kiss the ground that woman treads on. Impertinence, sir! What do you mean?”

“Well, what is it that makes these poor, low-down people around here take to Christy and Silver and Silent and Varney and the ladies that come? If there’s any secret about it, I want to know it.”

“Not much of a secret, sir, about that. It’s what they call ‘love,’ as near as I can make out. Though what those people find in this neighborhood to love, beats me.”

“Well, whose name is at the head of this concern?”

“As to that, I never heard tell of anybody’s name particular, unless it’s the name of Jesus Christ. That’s the name used mostly in this section of country. But what ails you? Have a cocktail, sir?”

Alfred Slocomb didn’t want any cocktail, but he placed a larger piece of money on the counter than that counter had ever felt the weight of before, all in a lump, saying:

“Can’t you use that, O’Shay, someway,

for the poor, good-for-nothing folk in this section? They are miserable and degraded, but I suppose they must be looked out for someway.”

O’Shay spurned the coin. “Sir,” he said, with more spirit than he could have been credited with having outside of the line of black bottles on the counter, “we are not good-for-nothing, nor miserable, nor so very poor neither. You needn’t come here to call us names. Such as you are not wanted here. It’s yourself that’s miserable. How do you like that?”

“Maybe it’s the truth,” Alfred Slocomb said with a breaking heart.

CHAPTER VI.

MR. SLOCOMB DOES NOT DIE OF HEART FAILURE.

HE WHO made human hearts knows full well that men more often die of hard hearts than of any other heart disease. Alfred Slocomb had fancied that he was soon to die of fatty degeneration of the heart. This was natural, since the doctor had diagnosed his case on that wise. And it was a good thing for Slocomb that he had his disease pointed out to him, and specified as fatal. If this had not been done, he would not probably have had his attention called to that other trouble he had, which was as fatal in its way as the first.

That he had a fatal heart trouble was certain. That his old, diseased, hard, degenerate heart was to be replaced by a perfectly new one, soft and regenerated, was just as certain. Old, long-standing cases like his were never known to be amenable

to treatment, patched up, or grafted with fresh supplies, or injected with foreign blood. There must be a perfectly new organ put in the place of the old one, as it is written by a certain Great Surgeon who has spent an eternity studying human hearts and the best way of treating heart troubles: "A new heart will I give you, a heart of flesh."

The Great Surgeon referred to no doubt had this operation in mind when he permitted his servant, Dr. Silent, to diagnose Slocomb's disease, and enlighten him as to the prudence of giving the patient a syllabus of the same with due warning as to his prospects, for the truest doctor is a servant of God and works harmoniously with his Master. So, by the combined efforts of these two in the case, Alfred Slocomb's condition progressed.

His heart was breaking indeed with disappointment and chagrin when he left the eating-house of O'Shay. He began to despise himself as he had not despised even those ragged, saucy little street arabs who had given him nothing but impudence for his money.

To think that he, Alfred Slocomb, whose name was sufficient, if spoken on Wall Street, to command respect and attention, was to be hooted at and literally run out of Deep Gutter neighborhood! And what was he anyway? Who was he? A pretty fair business man, always coming out on top in any enterprise east or west from Zanzibar to New York. Honest, too. He had always flattered himself that he was honest. In spite of these facts he began to despise himself, a condition of mind very favorable to his disease. He bade the driver take him home.

"Thomas," he said on alighting at his door, "when you have put up the horses, come to my office. I want to talk with you."

Now, Thomas was nonplussed at this injunction of his master's. What could he want of him? But he spoke kindly and seemed abstracted. "Poor man!" thought Thomas, "he is alone in the world. I will remember him at the throne of grace."

Now, this was not the first time that Thomas had remembered his master at the place mentioned. He proceeded thitherward at once. Opening the granary door, he went in and closed it after him and knelt down behind a barrel of rolled oats. A strange "throne of grace" surely. In all the great mansion owned and lived in by Slocomb, there was not another of the sort unless it be somewhere about the kitchen for the accommodation of Delia, the cook.

When Thomas was done "remembering" his master for the time being, he brushed the meal-dust from his knees and went to the office.

Why Mr. Slocomb had requested the presence of his groom in his office at eleven o'clock in the morning he did not know himself. He had a vague idea that he could turn doctor and give him, or loan him, a prescription for his pain. The fact that Thomas carried about with him a little prescription Book before mentioned, had not escaped the attention of his master. Not that Thomas was obtrusive in the display of this Book, or ever had displayed it in any way whatever. But masters are observing, and Slocomb was a man who missed nothing.

"Thomas," said the master, not rising, but speaking with haste, "I am in trouble. In trouble, Thomas. I am a miserable man. I despise myself. I have been nothing but a dog all my life, with my head to the ground on the scent of pelf. Do something for me, quick!"

Thomas was dumb with amazement. He looked at his master, on his forehead great drops of perspiration which the heat of the early day could scarcely account for. In his keen eye was an earnestness and sincerity startling to Thomas.

"Feel my pulse, Thomas."

Thomas obeyed and found it bounding and full, as much of it as he imagined he could feel through the superficial layer of fatty tissue which enveloped it.

"Thomas, what makes me despise myself so? What makes me so miserable?"

"I expect it's the fatty degeneration, sir."

"No, it is not that, Thomas. I could die happy this minute if I did not feel that I am a mean man."

"What have you been doing, Mr. Slocomb?" asked the groom, determined, now that his master had trusted him thus far, to get at the trouble if possible.

"Doing? Why, Thomas, I've been doing nothing all my life. I have not even had a family about me to do for, as I ought to have had, and me with this great mansion and all my money. It's the money, Thomas. I've loved it and loved it till my heart has grown as hard as the specie. And I can't buy anything I want with the money, now I've got it. I can't go down to Deep Gutter and have the children run after me, glad to touch my

coat skirt or anything about me, they love me so. On the contrary, they spit at me like so many kittens, and would scratch my eyes out if they could without being caught. What I want is love, Thomas, love! Can't you help me to get love from some quarter before I die?"

Now, Thomas was not a theologian by trade or profession; he was a simple groom, but a groom with a degree of intelligence. Neither was he a doctor of medicine, but he was gifted by nature and grace with diagnostic qualities of great value, and he immediately surmised what was the matter with his master. There came into his heart a great gladness that his master's malady had taken on so fatal a character, and he could scarcely refrain from singing. Singular predicament for a groom; but he collected his Christian wits, of which he had a plenty about him, and drew from his breast pocket the little Book referred to. He opened it to that portion or canto called Ezekiel, and said, looking his master full in the eye:

"Mr. Slocomb, let me read you a little from the inspired writings of Ezekiel the prophet, who seemed to have something always ready to suit an affair of the heart under any circumstances. I don't say that this passage will exactly fit your case, but it might give a little light, sir."

Slocomb waved his hand for Thomas to go on, and he read with peculiarly affecting emphasis: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart

of flesh. But not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God."

"Whose sake is it for then, Thomas?"

"For the sake of his Son Jesus, sir; his Son Jesus Christ being the express image of God; he, Jesus, suffering every known and unknown heart trouble, that he might be able to meet your case, sir. Giving his heart's blood at last, sir, that it might be transfused as it were into yours."

"I didn't call you here to preach to me, Thomas. I don't know what I did call you for."

"You called me to tell me that you was a mean man, sir, as near as I can make out; and to say as how your heart troubled you."

"That's so, Thomas. You've given me a sermon on my heart; now what have you to say about my meanness?"

Slocomb was affecting an air of liveliness, but his spiritual adviser discerned a twitching of the fingers and a restlessness of countenance which was significant. The groom was still standing, his master having overlooked the little matter of offering him a chair. But Thomas was quite willing to stand.

"As to your 'meanness,' sir, (I never called you mean—indeed you are the best and kindest of masters—but you called yourself mean) I will read you what this little Book has to say about mean men. It seems made to meet all sorts of

character: 'And the mean man shall be brought down, and the mighty man shall be humbled, and the eyes of the lofty shall be humbled.' I suppose that means



"Mr. Slocomb, let me read you a little."—See page 26.

that the mean man shall have a new heart, sir."

"Thomas, I wish I had a new heart."

With this expressed desire the whole figure of Alfred Slocomb, Esq., relaxed. The hardness of countenance which had

repelled the residents of Deep Gutter disappeared, and, in short—wonderful transposition!—Alfred Slocomb himself disappeared. There sat in the chair before Thomas, the groom, a being who might have been a child for tenderness. The tears, following the words, dropped on his broadcloth coat, and Thomas saw that the operation for heart-trouble was complete. He dropped upon his knees before his master and said, almost singing in his joy:

“Here he is, Lord! Blessed be Jesus, in whom we have redemption!”

Paul Silver and William Christy, comrades of the Cross and fellow-workers with Christ, sitting in the undertaker’s office, as they often did sit together, were going over the needs of the Mission and speaking of their recent singular experience with Alfred Slocomb.

“I do not know what made me refuse his money,” Paul was saying. “Do you know, Christy, I wish we had that man, heart and money both, for Christ. I feel impressed to pray for him in an unusual and personal way. Let us kneel and pray for him now.”

Strange coincidence this — a throne of grace in the grain-bin behind an oat-barrel, and one also behind the desk in an undertaker’s office on Main Street. But so it was. The two friends, kneeling before this throne, commended the fatally diseased heart of Slocomb to the God they themselves trusted, and then they arose and Christy looked at his watch.

“Eleven o’clock, Paul, and I must go. What warm weather it is! I should like to take a run down to Varney’s and get a

pocket full of August sweets this evening, wouldn’t you? ’Twould seem like old times when we were younger. Wonder if they have left that apple tree near Philip’s Tower still standing. Do you know there’s something about Cripple Johnnie that reminds me of Philip? I suppose it’s because he is a cripple. We ought to take especial pains with Johnnie for Philip’s sake.”

“Yes, it’s something in his eye,” Paul replied. “I have noticed it. Cripples have a natural sharpness of sensibility common to them all. Yes, let’s go to Varney’s for the sweets.”

If the two friends could have seen Cripple Johnnie that morning early, when he was daring Slocomb to touch him, “Pa” looking savage for all he was worth out of his shaggy face, they might have thought “natural sharpness of sensibility” indeed belonged to the boy.

Actually, though, there was something to remind one of Philip Silent about this misshapen “kid,” in slum parlance. The difference in their conditions was great. Cripple Johnnie had no father. His mother was a charwoman, cleaning windows and floors and stoves all day long ever since Johnnie could remember, and having little time or strength to pet him. But Johnnie had a heart, as truly as Philip ever had. He had a heart as truly as Alfred Slocomb had. And that little heart, beating behind his concave breast, had possibilities and aspirations and a future of its own.



CHAPTER VII.

HOW A TYPEWRITER MAY BECOME A
SERVANT OF GOD.

HAVING discharged his duties as spiritual adviser or medical attendant to his master, Thomas, the groom, departed to his own quarters a happy man. However, he took not to himself any credit in the affair, knowing full well that "salvation is of the Lord" — and Thomas was not one to steal, be it gold or merit.

He led out Billy and Tilly, the blacks, and looked them over while they laved their velvety noses in the trough. A few finishing touches to their already sleek coats and they were perfect, as horses go. Then he looked at the carriage and touched it up with the chamois skin where drops of wet dust had clung from the freshly sprinkled road. Henceforth he was to drive a "gentleman of the true nobility" — for had not his master become a child of the King and so, by inheritance and adoption, a prince royal? Thomas' active mind took in the full honor of the situation, and he commenced singing, "He's the Lily of the Valley."

Thomas would not presume upon the confidence of his master or count on further advances. He would be content with looking in his face now and then on taking orders, feeling certain of assurance from the look. Was not the face of his master now "set to the south"? While he was at his duties, sprinkling the sandy drive about the stables and sweeping the cobwebs from the creases in the outside finish, and scraping the little weeds from the margin of the grass plot in front, Thomas was busy at his thoughts, of

course on the line of the morning's experiences. "Strange," he was thinking, "this miracle of the new heart. A man known only for his greed, and display of what the greed gives him, to be changed 'in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,' just as St. Paul says we shall all be changed at the resurrection at the last day, body and all. Now I take it master will never be known again as a money-maker or as 'Shrewd Slocomb.' And there are some men who don't believe in this new heart put into a person, just because they can't see the tissues undergo the operation nor set their short-sighted eyes on the Surgeon's instruments. It's just the way God works with the seeds in the ground; always in the dark, in the heart of the earth, but all one has to do to convince himself that there's been a change is to look at the character of the ground where the seed was planted, look at it after the seeds have turned into grain. Just so a man's character changes. A new heart means a new self, a new character, because the heart sends its red tide to flush every part of the being from the center to the surface. Oh, I bless God for new hearts!" And Thomas' heart was full of thankfulness.

After the operation which Alfred Slocomb had undergone in his home office, there settled over and through him a certain peace or tranquil restfulness, and he lay down on the couch in the corner and fell fast asleep. Not that he was in any sense exhausted. But, owing to the tranquillity referred to, and the fact that he had not slept the previous night, he did sleep now at twelve, high noon. When the call for lunch came it did not reach his

ears, closed as they were to external sounds, and Thomas was asked to go and see what ailed his master. He knocked, and then opened the door softly. There lay the object of his affectionate search, his face in his fat hand, on the face an unaccustomed expression as if some invisible and tender touch had placed the imprint of a new seal upon it.

Thomas had heard doubters say, doubters in his own ranks who had caught the tinge of their thought from the coloring dye of some of their masters, that this change of expression in the face of a man was "imagination." He wished that he could bring these doubters to look upon the face before him at that particular moment. He would not disturb him, but let him sleep. And the door was closed softly; yet not so softly but it awoke the sleeper.

Slocomb sat up and looked around. Then he called Thomas.

"Thomas," he said, "drive me to Main Street."

Paul Silver, Undertaker and Funeral Director, was running over his accounts at the office desk. Ever since he had buried the first pauper in Appleville before the boom had changed the country town into Silver City, he had continued to bury paupers free "because he loved them so." Consequently there was a long list of such burials, more than offset, however, by another list. The first list was not kept as so much credit to his account — not a bit of it. It was kept only and solely for reference as to where certain supplies in his line had been applied. Yes, there was a long, long list of those in all stations in life whom he had laid in their last resting-

place. Opposite the names in the list was the statement, not intelligible to strangers should strangers chance to peer over the same, but quite intelligible to the undertaker himself, as to who had died in the faith of Christ.

Paul Silver was not given to questioning his patrons as to this matter; only, in case of the "faith" mentioned, somebody of all the stricken family was sure to mention the fact, even though that someone was not himself or herself in the faith. Survivors are not given to publishing the religious incredulity of their deceased friends. Paul Silver had even noticed a latent, undefined leaning in the opposite direction, and a desire to accord to the unfaith of the dead the benefit of a doubt.

Over the shoulder of the undertaker leaned lovingly a boy of fifteen or thereabouts, his eye running down the page with his father's.

"Father," he said, "you are too merry a man for your profession. You ought to have been a photographer or an auctioneer or a public lecturer. And yet I think I shall follow your calling myself. It is fascinating, if sad, this living in the catacombs."

Ralph's smooth cheek was against the bearded face of the father, and the breath of the two mingled as it went out into the hot August air.

A carriage drew up at the steps and a stout gentleman alighted.

"It is Slocomb," Silver said. "Bring him in, Ralph."

The portly figure of the man who had visited the undertaker's office the night before appeared on the threshold, and Paul rose to meet him. It needed no

words, nor were words ever used to express the change in Slocomb. Silver knew at a glance. When a man lives for years expecting in full faith the thing which he prays for, no need of surprise when it appears. And the boy noticed, student as he was of his keen-eyed and keen-faithed father.

The passing acquaintances of the day before, but now brothers in a common trust, clasped hands and understood. The sign of a certain very ancient order passed between them, the ancient order having for its founder and Grand Master, Jesus of Nazareth. It matters not that the "sign" referred to is indescribable to those not initiated. It is nevertheless a token. Its character is vaguely hinted at in the Prophet Isaiah, 55th chapter and 13th verse.

"You can count on me, Mr. Silver, at the Mission," Slocomb said.

"Glad of it," was the answer. "We need you. Come over to the Natural History Department meeting this evening, Mr. Slocomb."

From the undertaker's office Slocomb drove to his own business office in the heart of the city. He found his typewriter, Agnes Eliot, putting a new ribbon into the machine. She was just slipping the carriage in place and did not turn to address her employer; only said, without looking, "Good-afternoon, Mr. Slocomb." The ribbon adjusted and the type cleaned with a soft brush dipped in naphtha, the e's and o's scooped with a hard-pointed wooden toothpick, Agnes took up a bit of waste paper and adjusted it. Then she touched the keys and printed off three or four lines of words, just to be sure the

machine was in working order and ready for business. Satisfied, she drew out the slip of paper and threw it towards the waste basket where were the bits of her lunch wrappings, which lunch she had just disposed of with a healthy girl's good appetite. The slip of paper with the sample print on it escaped the basket and lodged on the floor at the feet of her employer. He took it up and read:

"Howbeit, in the business of the ambassadors of the princes of Babylon, God left him, to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart."

Slocomb was surprised. "Miss Eliot," he said quickly, "what made you write that passage, or quotation?"

"When I try the machine, sir, I almost always write a Bible sample, because these passages are the most familiar to me, I suppose, my childhood being largely given to committing to memory something from every department from Genesis to Revelation. I used to learn unfamiliar texts just for the novelty of it and because it surprised my companions. There is another reason, too, Mr. Slocomb, why I always write a Bible quotation; we typewriters have little opportunity for mission work of any sort, being so closely occupied with getting our bread and butter on the wages we can command; so I think, 'Maybe this quotation or that will reach somebody before it is burned in the dump pile; perhaps be picked up where the wind blows it down into a fence corner.' It's only a habit of mine, sir. I am sure it must have been God himself who inspired some servant of his to make a typewriter, and the machine ought to serve its master and maker, ought it not?"

"A machine to serve its master and maker!" Slocomb was thinking; "and here am I, the best part of my life gone, of less account in the world than a metal machine in the hands of my young typewriter!"

"Miss Eliot," he said, "put in a slip while I dictate."

The girl obeyed, without turning to her employer, and wrote as he dictated:

"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight; . . . make me therefore as one of thy hired servants."

"Miss Eliot," he said, "manifold that, and as many texts from the same source as you please, working on time and using extra strong paper. I will increase your wages from to-day fifty per cent. in consideration that you strike off sample copies of these quotations."

The girl turned in amazement. She had worked for Mr. Slocomb three years, typewriting at his dictation, but never had he dictated a sentence like the one now on the machine. There had been statistics in abundance, all these years, and figures! figures! line upon line, until she could add and subtract, spacing accurately and rapidly, as fast as she could count. She looked at him. That indescribable something which changed his features while Thomas, the groom, was looking on, impressed itself upon the girl's mind and she understood.

A business friend came into the office. "Good-afternoon, Mr. Slocomb," he said hurriedly, and with that nervous manner a man naturally acquires who is bent, all his life, on how he can prevent the "best chance" from slipping through his fingers. "We are likely to lose in that Col-

orado mining scheme unless we put in fifty thousand more. We've got to develop water-power, and the assay is small."

The thin lips of the speaker closed over teeth as set as if they were trying a sample nugget for its hardness, and he waited for Slocomb to order his typewriter to fill out a draft for the amount. He did not recognize the change in his friend. How could he, not having been himself initiated into the Holy Order? He would have denied the change if informed as to the fact, as men do deny it who are too stupid, or foreign to its character, to understand.

"Arthur," Slocomb said, "I don't care anything about that mining business. Just mark me out."

"What's come over you?" the other exclaimed, eying Slocomb sharply as if he were a bank-note.

"It's all right," the changed man replied. "I've had a vision, Arthur. A vision at midday or midnight or some time or other. And I can't get away from the vision; it stays. It's all about a Man who stood in a great market-place, the business center of a great town, and, standing, cried: 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' And when that Man came to die himself, and was thirsty, they gave him bitter vinegar to drink — only bitter vinegar. It's what I've been doing all my life — giving this Man bitter vinegar, instead of blessing, for the sweet draught he held out to all the world living or dying. I don't care anything about that mining business, Arthur."

Arthur looked disgusted and then interested. "Slocomb," he said, "you need

some of the bromides. Your brain is touched by the heat; better go home and order your physician."

As if bromides or sedatives of any sort could reach an affair of the heart like Slocomb's!

"It's the heart, not the head, that's implicated, Arthur," he said.

And the business partner went his way, greatly puzzled.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURAL HISTORY IN DEEP GUTTER CHAPEL.

"IT IS remarkable how soon a man falls in line with Christian thought and expression," Paul Silver was saying to William Christy. "Now, there's Slocomb. A person wouldn't take him for a Bible scholar, but he has an intuition or revelation or judgment that sets him down at our own door, so to speak. I suppose it's a miracle, to be a companion-piece to the other miracle of the new heart."

"I think it is a proof of this," Christy replied. "We Christian believers ought not to suppose for a moment that what we say, or read aloud, is lost on deaf ears, though the deaf ears may not appear to notice in the least. This man has never read the Bible for himself, unless it be as a study in literature, as he would read Shakespeare or Dante. But he has heard the Bible read and quoted. Possibly he has heard it from the lips of doubters, intent upon pulling it to pieces and throwing it away, not aware that Slocomb would gather up the bits afterwards and make an application the way he does. I believe that, by a sort of understanding

between the Author of that Book and believers, there is more of that Book quoted than of any other — more every day — and more of these quotations are retained by the memory than are retained from any other source. It seems to be the intention of God to make the world so familiar with his Word that when a man reads it, if for the first time, it is as if he had been reading it all his life."

The friends were on their way to the Tuesday evening meeting of the Natural History Department of Deep Gutter Sunday-school. They overtook Prof. Joseph Silent, whose sister Beulah was the wife of William Christy. "Professor Joseph," as his intimate friends called him, or, more often, "Professor Joe," because he had always found his chief delight in "bugs and things" ever since he could walk, carried in one hand a collecting-box with departments, and on the other arm a basket containing microscopes and pincers and various other implements necessary to his profession.

"I hardly dare leave these things at the chapel," he said to the two friends. "I wish some rich man would donate us money enough to build an addition."

"Your rich man will come along; don't you doubt it, Joe," Paul Silver said.

It was not yet dark. The inhabitants of Deep Gutter neighborhood were airing themselves on the curbstones, the windowsills, in the gutters, everywhere outside of their hot walls. The passing of the three men towards the chapel was the signal for all these to jump up and brush themselves and rush to the pump for a wash and a look in the glass. Big and little,

they all did it, and then hastened on towards the chapel.

The chairs had been unfastened from their moorings in the middle of the room and set back against the walls, this work being done by O'Shay, the ten-cent-restaurant keeper. O'Shay was interested in a peculiar way with what was going on in the neighborhood, and he liked to have a "finger in the pie," as he expressed it, he being accustomed to fingering pies of many sorts. He was not a believing or a professed member of the Mission Sunday-school, but he was a member, and a very useful one.

In the center of the room was placed a long extension table, the gift, or rather the loan, of O'Shay himself, he having in his possession a couple of them, and bringing this one over as often as needed. Professor Joseph found it necessary to ask Eliza Stubbs to be kind enough to wipe it off before spreading the evening's work upon it; the table, like the counter and the bottles and the walls of O'Shay's residence, having been very intimate with syrup and pie-juice and kindred fluids.

Thick and fast the perspiring congregation assembled. By common consent the "short fry" were given places nearest the table and the demonstrator; and, by common consent as well, the first of these who should be guilty of tittering or handling the specimens or otherwise being unruly, was put out into the lonesome street, there to remain and catch such glimpses as he might through the windows, or to go home and snivel and whimper at his hard lot. Cripple Johnnie was given a seat in a high-chair also provided by O'Shay, while all the others stood.

Prof. Joseph Silent was in his element, so to speak. As sure as fish ever loved water, or birds the air, or turtles the mud, or Arabs the desert, so surely did Joseph Silent love his chosen profession. He had always loved it, it being born and nurtured in him, and contributed to by a wise mother who saw in his first baby preferences the promise of his future avocation. He noticed that several of the youngsters, as well as the older ones, gripped sorry-looking parcels of various shapes, and his heart laughed within him at thought of the possible "specimens" which said parcels were sure to contain. Before entering upon the work of the evening every person in the room bowed his or her head, a ceremony necessary, or so considered by the "management," preceding any service. William Christy invoked the blessing of the heavenly Father in such words as these:

"We thank thee that these little creatures which we are about to study were made to give happiness and to remind us of our heavenly Father, who loves everything and everybody. If any one of us has hurt a little being during the week and given it unnecessary pain, we pray thee to forgive us and make us sorry. Amen."

Then came the agitation of expectation.

"What have you in your parcel, Mr. O'Shay?" Prof. Joseph asked.

O'Shay displayed a dirty, small match-box, that he uncovered and tilted into a large shallow tin receptacle which very nearly covered the entire table. Out dropped a shiny brown cockroach as much as an inch in length, which scurried around and around the tin enclosure,

whose slippery sides or walls it was impossible to scale.

"Ah, a cockroach!" said the Professor. "Fine specimen! Where did you find it, Mr. O'Shay?"

"Under the kitchen sink, where the drip oozes. There's lots of 'em there, and they come out in the night and go everywhere. They are a great nuisance in a good restaurant."

"That they are, O'Shay! But if you mend the pipe where the drip oozes, and clean out the dampness, and sprinkle the place with borax, the pests will go somewhere else — down under the curbstone, probably, to the waste water-pipe leakage. Pity there's any waste water leakage. Mr. Silver, won't you see to it that the attention of the City Board is called to this matter? There's danger this hot weather."

"I'll see to it," was the answer. And the Professor went on. "Now this Madam Cockroach, (we know it is a Madam because the wings are so imperfectly developed) has a very flat and hard body. This is so she can slip through cracks easily about her household affairs, and not mind it much if a foot comes down on her. I will turn her over with the pincers very gently, not to hurt, you know. Here is a very peculiar little shell or plate fixed to her abdomen in which are carried her eggs. When she is ready to dispose of them, she will hunt all over the kitchen sink or wherever there are moisture and moss or slugs, and put this plate with the eggs in it on a good place, according to her best judgment. She will stick the plate or shell which contains the fresh eggs fast to the place she has selected,

with a sort of glue which she knows how to make, and the babies will be born perfect little cockroaches. As these babies grow up they will secrete a dark-colored fluid in their mouths, like molasses, which they will spit out sometimes, and the smell of this is what is so disgusting in the neighborhood where cockroaches live. But, ladies and gentlemen, there is no need of being cruel to the insects; all you have to do is to keep very clean about the house, never allow a dripping pipe or a wet sink-board, and use a little wholesome borax, and, as I said, the cockroaches will disappear."

Every one was allowed a look at the insect and then it was dropped out of the window without harm.

"And what have you found this week to interest us, Mrs. Stubbs?"

The woman addressed exhibited a parcel made of many wrappings, which she proceeded to undo. When she came to the last one the audience could distinctly hear a scratching, and she said:

"It's a hornet, Mr. Silent — a great large one. Better be careful!"

"I'll take it," the Professor said, and he carefully opened it, just a little aperture. When Mr. Hornet stuck out his angry head he was seized just behind at the wing-joints by a pair of rubber-tipped pincers, and the wings were clipped with a pair of scissors.

"Now, Mr. Hornet, you may run around this apartment perfectly harmless. When we are done with studying you we shall drop you out of the window and let you run, like the rest of the people who have good legs. You can then proceed to get your supper either from plants

or insects or honey, as you are fond of everything you can lay teeth on.

"These hornets, ladies and gentlemen, as you well know, have very sharp and poisonous concealed weapons. This is the reason we do not consider them safe for associates. But they are very wonderful manufacturers, having paper-mills in active operation the most of the time when they are not asleep, and building their houses of this paper. There are no strikes in these mills that I ever heard of. They make the paper of wood fiber, converting the fiber into a sort of pulp with their saliva. This paper is always brown, I believe."

Dick Davis, who, with his friend, Pete Mooney, was an attentive student in the entomology class, took the creature and dropped it out of the window after the cockroach.

One of the girls of the neighborhood was observed to carry a small basket, from whose interior came the sound of ineffectual efforts to move about easily, a scratching and shuffling and flapping as of wings.

"What have you, Mary Mooney?" asked the Professor.

"Only some sparrows, sir," came from the tall, awkward girl in charge of the basketed specimens.

Sure enough, "it" was three young sparrow fledgelings that looked about them scared and tried to get away. They were laid in the tin tray and allowed to flop about.

"These sparrows," Professor Joseph said, "are very interesting people indeed. I think it is kind and thoughtful of them to come to live in Deep Gutter neighborhood, instead of always choosing Grand

Avenue and State Street. They are capable of being tamed and will lay their eggs right above your door on the sill, if you invite them with a wisp of grass laid up there. You could try taking the egg out every morning if you choose, for this would not be cruel, and see if the mother bird will not go right on laying more in the same nest just like a hen. I think she would. But you should never take the young birds. That is cruel. No one can be a true student of natural history and love to hurt a single thing. Mary, won't you put these birdies back in their nest when you go home?"

Mary said she would, and Joseph Silent continued:

"Because these birds are so common and plentiful some people think they have a right to persecute them. But I want every one who lives in this neighborhood to protect them. Watch their habits and see how interesting they are. Try tempting them to nest low within your reach, for you gain nothing by scaring them away to high places. I will offer a prize of twenty-five cents to the child under twelve years who, this week, will learn the most facts about the sparrows without harming a bird."

"Make it fifty cents, Professor Silent," came from an unfamiliar voice in the doorway.

Everybody turned that way, to see none other than the panting figure of Alfred Slocomb, Esq., on his face so genial a smile that it was reassuring in spite of prejudices.

"Come in, come in, Brother Slocomb!" said Paul Silver. "Glad to see you. Make the prize fifty cents, Professor; so

Brother Slocomb says. Ladies and gentlemen, I am happy to introduce to you my dear friend and brother, Mr. Slocomb."

Some of the girls tittered, and the boys nudged each other, notably Dick and Pete, who remembered their experiences of the day before with Slocomb.

It was with a degree of embarrassment that Slocomb took his place by the superintendent of Deep Gutter Sunday-school at this branch meeting of the organization.

"You see, sir," said Silver, "we consider this a necessary branch of the Sunday-school. It gives room for thought and humanitarian practice week-days, and brings people, little and big, in touch with their fellow-creatures in the way God would have them. This young Professor here," touching Joseph Silent's shoulder, "is doing the Lord's work just as surely as if he were preaching from an up-town pulpit. To gain the attention of people from their own petty grievances and cares, and the humdrum of a rather limited experience, is to do the work of the Lord, I take it. A man in Deep Gutter who will step a longer distance than normally just to avoid crushing an insect of whatever sort, has taken a long stride towards the kingdom. It is better to strew borax under the sink and to dry out the drip-holes, than to mercilessly destroy a swarm of creatures too wonderful for man to create or comprehend. In short, Mr. Slocomb, a man may preach the gospel of a merciful Christ with a toad or a hornet in his hand for a text. Is it not so?"

Slocomb smiled all over, thereby giving assent to the proposition.

"Hope you will come often, Mr. Slocomb."

To this invitation Slocomb also responded with a smile, and he looked very genial and good-natured and friendly withal, as if he had never seen anybody in his life, not even a street arab, whom he could find it in his heart to despise under any conditions.

The meeting broke up, to meet again the following Tuesday.

"Don't forget the Botany Class Saturday afternoon, ladies and gentlemen!" called Paul Silver as the motley congregation were scrambling down the steps and out into the streets.

"That we won't!" came in concert from the crowd. And the chapel was left to its own darkness.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SATURDAY BOTANY CLASS INVADES THE CHAPEL GABLE.

"WHAT we are trying to do, Mr. Slocomb," Paul Silver was saying as they walked along after the Entomology Class, "is to change the character of these people. As a class very common to large cities, they are by nature and nurture complaining, discontented, envious, and idle of thought. That is, the majority of them are so. The better-off of fortune and thought avoid them. They are uninteresting. This is the character they are known by to the superficial. But it is a mistake. Give them an opportunity to think, put something in their dreary way worth thinking about, you know, and behold! the mind is no longer idle. It is as strange as it is true, sir, that Satan has a

large supply of thoughts for idle people. They will think, if only to complain. Now what we want is to bring every thought into captivity to Christ. As a means to this end we lead them by the way of natural science. And you would be surprised to see the change which a few months have made. It is no uncommon sight to find men on their way home from work, all sweaty and soiled and tired, stop at an army of ants crossing the path, set their tin dinner pails down, and look; or at home, after supper, with their chairs tilted against the house-side, watch the bats spin around after the gnats, or the toads hopping on the pavement, or the swallows scolding about the nooks where they live or nest. And the women! you ought to see how interested they are in house spiders and garden worms and bugs! If they find a new individual they keep it for examination at the next Tuesday class. First get the thought, and then follows the heart. We have gotten both in many instances in this neighborhood, and God has a living church here, if the members do use unbeautiful terms of speech and murder the mother English in a dreadful way. The salvation of God is no respecter of English, though these people are improving in this respect. He understands when a man says brokenly, repenting of his sin, 'Oh, Lord, I'm sorry I done it! 'tain't no easy matter to do right. I'll try onct again by your grace.' God in heaven understands that sort of speech as perfectly as he understands the prettiest-spoken prayer in an up-town congregation; and that is a great comfort to us who have this neighborhood in our daily prayer."

"I thought these natural branches were taught in the public schools, and by Professor Silent, too," observed Slocomb.

"And so they are. But coming here to the parents and studying the creatures right in their way, brings it home and makes a personality of the teaching which is good. And Faith Silent, a young sister of Joseph Silent's, is their instructor in botany and apiculture and such things. Come over Saturday afternoon, and you will become interested yourself in what she has to say."

"By the way, Mr. Silver, that 'Joseph,' as you call him, is rather a young Professor, isn't he? 'Way down in the twenties."

"Yes, he's young. I've known him ever since he was in knee trousers. He and this sister of his were given a hold on the public schools by a clause in their father's deed to the property which the buildings occupy. You see all this neighborhood belonged to Dr. Silent once, and it was he who secured to it the large lot our chapel stands on. Well, these young folks have a life tenure on the lots adjoining the high-school building, and it is they who conduct the Departments of Horticulture and Natural Science. These two departments have done more to refine the thought and conduct of the young folks of this city than a person who does not know can imagine. Character is shaped by little things—a touch on the right side of pity or wonder, when a touch on the opposite side would misshape it. God intended to call the attention of his world of thinking creatures, whether rich or poor, to the garden and the hay-field and the stock districts and the flies and

the toads and the birds and the fish and the creeping things, and every form of animate and inanimate life, else why would he have given all these so much space in the Book which is able to make us wise unto salvation? The Christian world has been overlooking this, thinking, if it thinks at all about it, that these subjects were used to fill space or as incidentals to something else. Take the Bible and read it from beginning to end, and see if it is not strange that Sunday-schools and mission chapels have not before taken up the subject of natural history. We have let these things pass with little notice, while the adversary of souls has been teaching the little children to step on God's creatures and persecute them, they following the example of their parents, and to fish with bent pins instead of counting the scales of the finny beauties, and to cry 'horrid things!' at sight of spiders and snakes, when they might be learning the wonder of them and so honoring the Maker. Take the Book, sir, and rid it of all parts alluding to these neglected subjects, and see what is left."

As the August sun declined in its fierceness on the next Saturday afternoon, a young lady of refined and animated face might have been seen wending her way towards the Deep Gutter neighborhood, on her arm a basket of such implements as she might need. By her side was a younger girl, her sister Beth, who was her constant companion in this branch of the Sunday-school work.

At the approach of the girls the children of the neighborhood rushed to the ever-ready pump, where they "abluted"

to the best of their ability, preparatory to the afternoon session. As they passed the pump, Faith said to Beth, "What a good deed it was for Bob Green to hang that bit of mirror on the place where it was most needed! See Pete Mooney now; he is washing his face again because he took a peep into the glass. And there's Cripple Johnnie. Dick Davis is holding him up so he can look in. A city missionary would have overlooked that, most likely, thinking of work-houses and sewers and sewing-classes and Sunday-schools; but Bob Green thought of the looking-glass."

By this time part of the children were following them, and the two girls turned into the narrow alley between the house of Eliza Stubbs and Ann Davis. The women came out eager to meet them.

"Rather warm weather, Mrs. Stubbs," said Faith. "Too warm for most things to grow. But I've brought some sunflower plants and bean vines already started."

"I don't see where in the name of goodness you are going to plant them, Miss. There ain't a foot of ground in this neighborhood besides the place where I stand when I wash. I'd be mighty pleased to have things growing — it's cooling and pretty — but I'm sure you can't find no room."

Faith laughed. "Doesn't the house stand on ground, Mrs. Stubbs, and the sidewalk? There's the best of ground in all this neighborhood. I used to play all over it when it was a huckleberry pasture, and I know what it's like."

Faith set down her basket and took from it a long pointed iron, and a scoop like a spoon. With the iron she pricked

deeply every bit of the earth visible in the cracks between boards and by the house margin, and then with the scoop she mellowed and made holes in it. In these holes she dropped the roots of the plants she had brought, and covered them with the scoop and took slim little sticks which she had with her to give them a start on, pushing them into the ground and leaning them against the house.

"Now you see, Mrs. Stubbs," she said, "these will grow beautifully. They like shade, and your tubs will be always leaking to give them a drink. Being in the cracks, the roots can never dry out, and you've no idea how fine the plants will be by the last of September. And they will be protected from the early frosts here. I brought the sunflowers because they are always pretty, you know, and bright, and because the seeds will be worth something at the seed stores if you take the trouble to protect them from the birds and to gather them when they are full-grown without waiting for them to be dry and fall out. They are Russian sunflowers, and valuable. I brought the beans because they are nice vines for green and for blooms, besides being useful. You will get several messes from them for the table. They are the lima bean, large and flat, and very appetizing."

"I hope you don't think we need anything appetizing around here!" Mrs. Stubbs said, laughing, with her fat arms akimbo. "We don't lack for appetite."

"That's why I brought the beans," Faith said.

Then she and Beth went further, followed by the class, boys and girls and women.

They came to a low shanty with one window and door which had been empty the week before. It was now occupied. The door was open and a gayly-attired woman sat in it tilted back in a chair. She was gayly but cheaply dressed in a black alpaca with blue trimmings. Her hands were large and strong and resolute. Her face was honest, and there was an air about her that was reassuring to the girls. They looked at the grimy window where a new sign displayed itself:

AMANDA STOUT
Chiro-pod-ist and Masseuse.

"What in the world!" Beth exclaimed, pressing her sister's arm, "what have we here!"

Faith went up to the woman. "Good-afternoon," she said merrily.

The woman untilted her chair and offered it.

"No, thank you," Faith said; "we are planting flower-slips this afternoon. Have you any space here?"

"Can't afford to buy flower plants," the woman replied good-naturedly. "All I can do to buy bread these hard times. Can I do anything for your feet or lame backs?"

Then it dawned upon the amused girls that their new acquaintance was a chiropodist and masseuse, and they laid their plans inwardly to capture her at once.

"No, Mrs. Stout," Faith answered, "we have no corns, and our backs never get lame. Hope you will do well in this neighborhood. We are glad to see you. Won't you come down to the chapel with

us and help get some honey out of the roof? We need somebody with a strong mind like you. The rest will most likely be afraid of the bees and run just when we need them most."

Amanda Stout looked pleased. She would go, she said, just as soon as she could lock the shop, for fear some of her things might be stolen. The girls looked about, and saw nothing but a jack-knife and a dentist's lancet and half-a-dozen wooden meat-skewers. These they concluded comprised the "chiro-pod-ist's" stock of implements. As to the "massey-use," they had no doubt of her skill when they looked at her immense hands while she was locking the door.

Proceeding to the chapel, they were followed by more of the inhabitants, who had looked forward to this day, all the long summer ever since early in June. It all came about in this way:

One Sabbath morning during the Sunday-school, or just after it had begun, Pete Mooney came running into the chapel very much excited and saying to Joseph Silent, who taught the class of intermediate girls:

"Oh, Mr. Silent, there's a whole lot of bugs or something on the roof! They are flying and crawling in and buzzing like thunder!"

Immediately Joseph Silent forgot decorum and made a bee-line for the door, followed by his class and, in their wake, the whole school. Paul Silver smiled to himself. How well he remembered that Joe Silent, as a boy, exhibited no self-control at mention or sight of any living little creature! He would bolt from church or school or from the family circle at sight

of a rare butterfly or bird or bee, as if his name had been called. And Professor Silent, at this very moment, was but a boy grown tall. At his elbow was Faith, his childhood's friend and comrade. The two stood, looking up, and shading their eyes with their hands. There, in the point of the gable, were the very holes they had bored when they were children on purpose for bees to find. All these years had passed, and the bees never came till now. And what a lot of bees! The swarm was as large as a hay-mow, darkening the air and buzzing, according to Pete Mooney, "like thunder."

The children were greatly excited. "They'll sting us! They'll sting us!" they cried.

Faith reassured them. "Why, children," she said, "these bees are especial friends of mine. I always hoped they'd come to our chapel. My brother Joe and I made those holes in the roof when we were no bigger than you, Pete, long ago when the chapel was a little red school-house in Appleville."

Then her brother said, "Let us all go back into the school-room now, children, and by and by my sister will show you why she and I wanted the bees to come here. Wait till August, and never stone the little things, for they are very sweet people and quite worth having for neighbors. They have all gone into the holes now."

And so the school reconvened, and the classes went on as before, the amused superintendent glad in his merry heart that the bees ever took a notion to come to the mission. "They are our co-workers," he thought to himself, never once scolding

even in his mind on account of the interruption.

All that was long ago in June, and now it was past mid-August. Looking up into the point in the chapel gable, there was nothing to be seen but a few solitary bees going in and out of the auger holes clumsily, falling to a narrow shelf which had been fastened beneath for a door-step when the bees should come home too heavily laden with nectar to pass in readily. From this shelf they crawled in and disappeared in the dark.

O'Shay came out to offer his services.

"Yes, you can help us," Faith Silent said; "we need a ladder to go up on through the hole in the ceiling inside."

O'Shay brought a ladder and set it where it was needed. Then he went cautiously up and lifted the trap which covered the hole, pushing it to one side above. It must be confessed that he backed down with alacrity at a certain sound which met his ears, knowing better the reputation of bees than he knew their real character.

Faith and Beth noticed this alacrity and smiled. "I will go up first, Mr. O'Shay," the former said, "and then Beth, and after that you can come to the top of the ladder if you like."

Faith Silent got ready a bee-smoker out of whose nozzle rushed a blue cloud which had in it the scent of catnip and bay and peppermint and other herbs. Faith was a skilled and loving hand at apiculture, and she reasoned that since smoke must be used in the work, one should see to it that it was of pleasant smell.

Laughingly she climbed the ladder be-

fore the gaping crowd beneath. Had she not been an expert in all sorts of such feats when a child? And lessons learned in childhood are not forgotten by twenty-three.

She passed out of sight and could be heard from beneath, moving about softly and talking in low tones, to the bees presumably. Then she came down the ladder.

One by one the members of her class were allowed to pass up to the square hole and take a look. One by one they backed down again, fear and wonder on their flushed faces. Such a sight as that would not be likely to come to them again. From the rafters hung broad slabs of honey-comb in mid-air, blackened by bees filling themselves hurriedly, as bees will when disturbed, anxious to save as much as possible of their precious store, and so filling their sacks, till they are unable to fly from the weight of the load. Faith had smoked them to gentleness and consequent industry.

After the class had been informed as to some of the habits of the brood, the honey cells, and the nurses, and the drones, and the queen, and the workers, Faith again mounted the ladder, followed by Beth and Amanda Stout, and last but not least by O'Shay, whose strong arms were needed. Others, as many as could peer through the hole, went up the ladder, now and then backing down to let the rest take a look.

Carefully cutting around the brood, Faith removed as much of the best honey-comb with its sealed sweetness as she thought the bees could spare, and passed the heavy pieces on to Mrs. Stout and O'Shay, who placed them in large tin pans

supplied from the restaurant and half the families around. She left the brood undisturbed, explaining that as a bee's life is not longer than three or four months at best, it was necessary to have young ones always on hand to supply the places of those who had worn themselves out with hard work.

O'Shay passed the pans down to others who stood in line, and when it was all taken there was at least one hundred and fifty pounds. It had been a fine honey-harvest and the swarm was a large one. "Fully half a bushel," O'Shay said, never once losing the scared look, but ashamed to exhibit fright in the presence of two brave girls who were in the front ranks of the battle.

There was honey enough to give every family in Deep Gutter neighborhood a sample.

"This is your honey," Faith Silent said as she distributed it in the chapel entry, while she gave Mrs. Stubbs a larger share on account of her services in cleaning up afterwards. "This is your honey. It belongs to this branch of the Sunday-school. The bees were created to give us pleasure, and the Great Book we all love so much tells a great deal about them. Read it and see. By the last of September there will be more in the gable. God, our heavenly Father, is not forgetful of his children. He puts good things in their mouths, and good thoughts in their hearts."

And so closed this branch of the Deep Gutter Sunday-school.

CHAPTER X.

MORE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER.

AND so the praise of God was shown forth in the chapel gable. A swarm of bees contributed to both the physical and spiritual well-being of Deep Gutter neighborhood. Alfred Slocomb, who had been a silent spectator of the afternoon's adventure, went home a wiser man, commenting to himself on this wise:

"It is strange that people do not more often bore holes in chapel gables, yes, and church roofs as well. It's better than making money, this work these young disciples are doing. Developing characters for Christ, and making bees and birds and insects and sunflowers and bean-vines contribute to the fund they draw upon. Well, my life is almost passed, and I've nothing but a miserable hoard to contribute myself, but I'll give that."

Alfred Slocomb had forgotten all about his "fatty degeneration of the heart" ever since the operation which had made him a new creature, heart and all, and he was full of schemes of how to spend his money. It was the work of only a few days to complete a Natural History Division addition to the little chapel. And then it was supplied with a cabinet. But Alfred Slocomb, Esq., never permitted his name to be used in any gift, for, as he said, his old name carried with it only neglect and misery and despite and shame. Only the Name that is above every name was used in Deep Gutter work.

"If this were always done," Paul Silver said to William Christy, "how the name of Christ would be extolled and honored! Instead of His name, we see the names of



Jones and Brown and Black or Smith on lofty arches and masonry, suggesting nothing to the world but that 'such a man amassed a great fortune, and when he could use no more of it, he built a house or pedestal to support his poor name on.'"

Late in the fall there was another addition made to the chapel. Behind it, where the yard or lot terminated at the great, bare, unwindowed side of a tenement house, stood Pete and Dick and their usual following.

"Say, Pete," said Dick, "what are they going to make now? Looks like a great kettle."

"Why, you goose, that's a swimmin'-hole for us kids! They're goin' to plaster it all up tight and put a roof over it like a umbrella, so's we can flounder round in it hot days all we want to. There's an outlet and an inlet, and the whole thing's to let, and next summer we'll be happy. Ain't you glad we belong to this Sunday-school?"

Dick said he was, and then the boys went over to the opposite side and sat down on the curb, with Cripple Johnnie and his dog, "Pa."

"Say, Johnnie, what makes you so gloomy?" asked Pete as kindly as he knew how to speak. Johnnie was sad, that was certain.

"I guess you'd be gloomy 'f you had a crooked back and lame legs and didn't feel well nohow, and your mother wasn't to home at all, and you had to pick up your dinner out'n what was left of breakfast, and folks stared at you 'cause you limped, and some o' the kids pestered you. I guess you'd be gloomy 'f you didn't know what was goin' to become of yer."

"Now, Johnnie," Pete said coaxingly, "they say over to Sunday-school that nobody has no right to say they don't know what's goin' to become of 'em. They say it's like sayin' 'You fib' to God, and that's wicked. He's goin' ter take care of every one of us, you know he is."

Cripple Johnnie was crying for all he was worth, leaning his face in "Pa's" shaggy coat and boohooing just like any boy.

"Now, Johnnie, that ain't fair!" Pete continued. "We folks in Deep Gutter'll never let anythin' happen to yer."

"But it's comin' cold weather, and I ain't got no shoes and no undershirts, and my trousers are too short in the left leg — and oh, boys, my mother drinks!"

And then Johnnie cried louder than before, which made Pa look very sad and lick Johnnie's forehead with his red tongue. The group had not noticed that a spectator to their little dialogue had been standing not ten feet away.

Alfred Slocomb, Esq., had taken to spending a good deal of time in the last months about Deep Gutter, and had made many warm friends in the neighborhood. He had just been conferring in a confidential way with O'Shay at his restaurant and these were the last words O'Shay had said to him as he went away: "Good boy, sir, as ever was. I'd take him myself if I wasn't a bachelor and lived alone and drank too much beer sometimes. He's no bother at all round here, and he's better-tempered than he used to be, too."

While Slocomb had been hearing the conversation, and noting the tears, and Pete's sympathy expressed in so graphic a manner, he was making up his mind.

"Yes, I will take him. If he were only a handsome boy now, one to be proud of and show off as an adopted son, it would be different, I admit. But Cripple Johnnie is like my past life, lame and misshapen and dwarfed. There's the making of a man in him maybe, just as there is the making some amends in the few years that are left to me, as far as amends can be made in the face of such a past. Johnnie! Johnnie, I say!"

Johnnie looked up and wiped his red eyes on his shirt sleeve. "Yes, sir. What?"

"Would you like to go to my house and make me a good long visit, Johnnie, and be like a child to me? If you would I'd like to have you."

"Can I take Pa?"

"Yes, you can take Pa."

"Then I'll go."

And the compact was made.

A week later the carriage of Alfred Slocomb, Esq., was moving in and out of the throng of carriages on Maine Street, when a woman was seen to fall on the sidewalk, uninjured but dead. Slocomb halted to see, and the one he saw was Cripple Johnnie's mother. He ordered the body taken to Deep Gutter chapel, where the undertaker did his kindly work, and so it came to pass that there was another funeral in Deep Gutter Sunday-school. Not that Cripple Johnnie's mother had ever been a member of the Sunday-school, but Johnnie was, and his mother belonged to Johnnie.

As usual, the simple services were conducted by the superintendent, Paul Silver, Undertaker and Funeral Director, in the manner peculiar to him and his people

about him. "When a person dies that we don't happen to know much — that is, anything good — about," Silver was saying, "we must remember that we do not know very much anyway, but God the heavenly Father knows a great deal. Crip-



"Would you like to go to my house, Johnnie?"

ple Johnnie's mother had troubles — we all know that — and probably we could have helped her more than we did to bear her troubles, if we had only tried. She wasn't well for a long time, and that was what made her seem so cross and offish from us all."

"She had cancer," broke in Amanda

Stout, "but I could 'a' cured her with my massey-use."

"However that may be," the preacher continued, "we do know that pain is hard to bear." Here Johnnie himself began to cry, and the women near him wiped their eyes with their aprons. "On this account we ought to think well of the dead, and not blame her for what we were perhaps responsible for ourselves. How many think they could have been kinder and more helpful to this dead woman if they had the chance to try over again?"

Three or four hands went up, and Eliza Stubbs said, sobbing:

"I could have divied up my work with her when I had more'n I could do, and I could have had Johnnie eat his dinner over to our house, and I could have told her that coffee wasn't so hurtful as beer."

"And Pete and I needn't have called her names, nor drummed on her winder in the dark to scare her, nor piled her back yard full o' bottles to plague her," said Dick Davis whimpering, his little one-year-old conscience standing up for itself and shaming O'Shay, who was wishing with all his might that he never had sold her a nickel's worth of beer; but, having no conscience to speak of as yet, he remained non-committal.

"I'll admit I ought to have shingled up her old shanty of evenings, when I had time and plenty of old shingles to spare piled in my back alley what I'd had left at shinglin' houses." This from a carpenter of the neighborhood.

It was his wife who followed, saying, "When folks is dead we all wish we'd done somethin' for 'em. I think it's a

good deal better to turn our attention to them that's alive."

"'N' what's goin' to become of Johnnie now?" asked Eliza Stubbs, who was figuring in her motherly mind how she could make room for him between her own four boys by dint of hard squeezing.

"His heavenly Father'll take care of Johnnie, I haven't a doubt," Silver replied. "Johnnie has a great work to do in this world, teaching people how to be patient and forgiving and kind and beautiful in spite of trouble and pain. I had a friend like you once, Johnnie" — turning to the boy who sat close to the coffin, a piteous figure crying softly to himself, while "Pa" looked on and licked his brown hand. "Yes, Johnnie, I had a friend like you once, and he used to say that for the very reason that he was lame and weak, he must try harder than other people to plant efforts and make the world better. And he did try hard. If it hadn't been for him I don't know as this Deep Gutter chapel would have been here now."

Johnnie was crying harder, and, it being evident that the services were drawing to a close, he was surrounded by his friends, even by those who had always considered him a nuisance in the neighborhood and expressed themselves as to that point right in his hearing. They all pressed around Johnnie now, and told him they "was sorry," and he'd "meet his mother in heaven," and O'Shay said he would "bake a little pie for him." The promise of the little pie came too late to the boy who had subsisted without pie in any great amount up to this time, for Cripple Johnnie disappeared after the funeral was over.

Some said he had gone into the country; others, that he had gone to the Orphan Asylum; while those who knew said that he had been adopted by Alfred Slocomb, Esq., of Mansion Avenue. The child dropped out of the daily life of Deep Gutter, excepting as he came with his newly-acquired friend on Sunday and took his old place in school. He came in the carriage, the carriage not stopping any more around the corner, but driving right up to the door, Alfred Slocomb being too clumsy to walk much and his charge being too lame.

One day the two were out for an airing, driving down towards Apple Tree Park, when Thomas was ordered to stop, the occupants of another carriage signaling to Slocomb. It was none other than Slocomb's old partner in business, Colonel Arthur Wheeler. The Colonel's only son was at his side, dudish and surfeited with everything that could do him any injury.

"Why, Slocomb," said Wheeler jokingly, "they tell me you've adopted an heir. I should like to meet the young gentleman."

"John," said Slocomb, addressing the boy beside him, "this is my old friend, Colonel Wheeler."

Colonel Wheeler looked his disgust. "Well, Slocomb, you always were an odd man! You, to adopt a cripple like that! George, drive on."

Then Slocomb sat thinking. The boy at his friend's side was a dwarf in soul. Johnnie at his own side was large and well-formed in soul. In his face was a look of refinement after suffering, as if he had been through a sore battle and had

conquered. No one would have recognized Cripple Johnnie in this boy but for his bent back and short legs. Slocomb had learned to love the child. There was always vivid in his mind his first meeting with him in Deep Gutter, when he had offered to carry him, and Johnnie had thought he meant to run away with him and had set "Pa" after him.

It did not hurt Slocomb that his old friend had ridiculed him for adopting a cripple. But it hurt the cripple. Slocomb became aware that tears were falling down the face beside him and were being caught slyly in a little white hand.

"Johnnie," he said tenderly, "you and I must pray for Colonel Wheeler. Who can tell but he may have a new heart yet?" And Johnnie said he would pray. "When you pray for any person, Johnnie, the person who ridicules you maybe, that person is very likely to be set to thinking somehow; nobody can tell how, but before you know it he takes it all back, and, like as not, becomes your best friend and Christ's friend."

Mr. Slocomb was silent for a little, then he spoke again:

"Would you like to have Pete and Dick to dinner with you, Johnnie?"

Johnnie's face brightened. Accordingly they drove around and got the boys, who had each a suit of pretty clothes which it did not take very long for them to jump into, owing to the new bath and the dressing-room adjoining. Where the clothes came from they never knew, but they were every bit as good as Johnnie's, who dressed like a prince every day now, and had a tutor all to himself, and was learning to speak correctly, and to be

polite, and to read no end of beautiful books.

Mary Mooney had been "adopted" by Delia, Slocomb's cook, who had sorely needed an apprentice, and who took to the child affectionately, being of the same mind as her master, and she taught the child all her arts, and how to be a "lady of the land" in all honor and industry and virtue. And Mary went back to her home occasionally to tell what she knew, and so became a home missionary, and a better feeling grew in the hearts of the Deep Gutter people towards the people who dwelt on Mansion Avenue, for they reasoned that if they knew everybody as well as they knew the few, the chances were that everybody would be found agreeable. Every month the envy of their class was diminishing and they thought of the people of the richer classes as beings who needed their prayers and kind thoughts. Thus did character develop in a peculiar manner in certain portions of Silver City. It was also developing for fifty miles around, only the matter was kept very quiet. There came a time, however.

CHAPTER XI.

A YOUTH AND HIS FATHER AND A COAT-OF-ARMS.

WHEN a man submits to an operation for hard heart and finds, as a result, that he has an entirely new organ within him, his former incredulity as to the logic of miracles is very apt to vanish, as was the case with Alfred Slocomb, Esq. He could hardly believe the testimony of

his own memory as to the fact that once upon a time, not so very long ago, he had expressed himself as despising the gamins of Deep Gutter neighborhood, and Cripple Johnnie in particular. Now, this same man found himself solicitous as to Cripple Johnnie's health, the condition of his clothes, his schooling, how he slept at night, whether his feet were kept dry, and other items of interest. In short, he found himself loving Johnnie instead of despising him, and he had no aversion whatever to the rest of the unkempt, uncared-for class whom he used to "hate the sight of." Miracles indeed! This was a greater miracle than feeding five thousand people on five loaves of bread, for, in the one case, there was some bread to begin with, while in the other there was not a particle of love for a foundation or nucleus. It was a double miracle in the case of Slocomb and the gamins, for these strange folk responded to the love in Slocomb's heart, as soon as they became aware of the same. They no longer made faces and uncanny signs at him, but ran to meet him and washed their faces on purpose to "look decent" on his account.

And now I am about to record another miracle, which, because it does not happen to be found in all its details in modern parlance inside the covers of a certain ancient and very much set-upon Book, will not meet with the contradiction which it otherwise might. And besides, it happened under my own observation and I vouch for the truth of the story; I, an unknown, unfamed, very ordinary story-teller. Certain cavilers as to miracles will believe a tale told by a person of the writer's character, when they might

discredit as "fiction" or "tradition" something very much like it told by such men as Isaiah the Prophet, or David King of Israel, or Saul of Tarsus.

When Colonel Wheeler, business friend of Alfred Slocomb, came into the office and found Slocomb dictating Scripture texts to his typewriter, he became affected by a force new to him. When Slocomb said, as excuse for not taking further interest in the mining scheme, that he had been "offering the Man Christ Jesus bitter vinegar to drink all his life, instead of blessing for the sweet draught this Man had been holding out to all the world," the words had set a very active, though quiet, force to work in his friend's heart. Wheeler had tried to repress the operation of this subtle principle. But there were additions to this force from time to time; for instance, he picked up a slip of paper from the margin of a downtown gutter where a street cleaner was at work sweeping up débris from the corridors of the business offices, and read what was typewritten on the slip, it having on the upper right-hand corner the name and business address of a familiar friend. It was nothing of any importance to him, that he could make out; only a verse or passage from an ancient and holy Book whose contents will not down, though the weight of centuries of skepticism be pressed upon them, said contents coming to the surface in unexpected places, such as street-sweepings for instance, or hieroglyphics cut in the bark of trees, the hieroglyphics ascending as the tree grows in height until they are out of reach of such as would deface them.

Colonel Wheeler threw the paper down,

wondering what in the world he ever picked it up for, and immediately supposing that he had dismissed the subject matter from his busy mind. Agnes Eliot, stenographer and typewriter for Alfred Slocomb, was entirely unconscious that she had preached a sermon, such as any typewriter might preach who had in her hand a fragment of paper, and before her a machine with new ribbon waiting to be sampled.

The force referred to was hardly making itself manifest to Colonel Wheeler, certainly not to his associates, unless it was to render the man a trifle more impatient and curt than usual, a condition frequently met with in similar circumstances.

He was sitting in his home office or library one day after dinner, viewing the business proceedings of the last month complacently and stroking himself, figuratively speaking, for certain very promising ventures which he had made. Then he fell to admiring a coat-of-arms before him, and rubbing his hands together with satisfaction that he had been able to procure it. A knock at the door and his son entered, the young man before referred to as riding on the seat with his father when they met Alfred Slocomb and his "adopted heir."

"This is our family coat-of-arms, my son," the colonel said, addressing the youth. "As you see, our charge is a wild boar and an ass in mortal combat. Heraldry is a proof of noble ancestry. It has cost me much money and many years of waiting to thus prove our lineage. To come of noble ancient stock is the best legacy of a father to his heir. You are

the latest, as far as now appears, of the noble family of Wheelers. Reverence your ancestry. You are of no common blood; bear that in mind, and live and die an honor to your ancestors."

"Yes, father," said the young man.

"And, my son," resumed the father, "should it fall to your lot in the natural course of human events to perpetuate our illustrious line, see to it that your descendants are taught to honor their ancestors, even as I have taught you."

"Yes, father," again said the son.

The answer came from a smooth-faced youth of twenty, whose expressionless features were set in a ground of that pale, sallow tint common to late hours and cigarettes and plenty of money. There was something of the student, too, about him; the student of the overfed type, whose brain was thin for lack of effort, very much as was his narrow chest. But the father saw only in the young man as he stood before him, the last scion of a noble family, and he looked upon his form with pride; a pride which moved him to draw from his pocket a corpulent purse and present to the object of his affection a note for five hundred.

"Take this," he said with emotion, "and go back to your college, devoted to your family and its ancient and honorable lineage."

"Yes, father," said the youth, not surprised nor grateful, as far as appeared, and pushing the note into his vest pocket.

When the son had left the room, Colonel Wheeler sank back in his great, soft chair and gazed around the library. It was adorned and invested with all that gold could contribute. The latest sub-

scription of wealth to its resources was the emblazoned coat-of-arms already mentioned. Colonel Wheeler fixed his keen gray eye upon it and tossed a sigh of satisfaction upon the perfumed air.

"Ah!" he said aloud to himself and into the ear of his happy fortune, "this is gratifying! To be able to trace one's pedigree to Charles the First is the reward of ambition and toil. I would I might follow its trail back another decade."

Then he fell into a reverie. From his reverie he was roused by his man George at the door.

"What is it, George?" asked the Colonel, reluctant to let go of his retreating reverie.

"A gentleman is desirous of an interview with Colonel Wheeler," George said, bowing. "He is dressed in the coat of a clergyman."

"Bring him in," commanded the Colonel. "He would probably request my name on the Board of the Protoplasm Theological Seminary." Then he thought to himself, "If science can trace our origin to protoplasm, why may not science trace our family lineage a thousand years?"

George ushered in a stranger whom Colonel Wheeler rose to greet. He was a small man bodily, but there was that about him which suggested largeness of soul to the extent of filling the room, and the Colonel was deferential.

"I have called," the stranger said, arriving at the point without loss of time, accustomed as he was to dealing with this type of men, "to solicit a subscription. We would extend our missionary efforts this year to meet the needs of a race, or

the remnant of a race, neglected, and, until now, strangers to our religion and civilization. We hope, Colonel Wheeler, for a generous donation from you."

The Colonel moved in his chair as men do move who are ill at ease in mind but imagine something is wrong with the cushions. Then he called the stranger's attention to the coat-of-arms upon the wall.

"We come of a noble line, sir," he said. "Blood will tell. We are a family of gentlemen."

This remark seemed irrelevant to the stranger, but he replied smilingly:

"Certainly, Colonel Wheeler. Lady Juliana Burness made the assertion that Adam, our common ancestor, was a gentleman."

The Colonel went on without noting the remark: "It is useless to try to lift those heathen you mention.

They have no pedigree save one of savagery and degradation. Take a people with ancestry now, and I would subscribe with pleasure. With pleasure, sir. There is hope, nay, I would say, there is absolute moral and religious destiny for a race with the proper lineage, even though the de-

scent may have been concealed for decades. I have no sympathy with missionary efforts as a whole, sir, especially among savages of a low type. They



"This is our family coat-of-arms," said the Colonel.—See page 49.

are better off as they are. A thousand times better off. 'Leave them alone,' is my motto; alone to their fate. Whether there be a future beyond the pale of earthly existence, to lift them, with proper environments, it is not for me to say. They are in the hands of Al-

mighty God. But leave them alone, sir."

Colonel Wheeler could quote Scripture if necessary, for he had been born and bred in a land of Bible-readers, and he could not have avoided a certain familiarity with Christian terms, any more than he could have spurned acquaintance with the air he breathed. Such men are sometimes taken for believers in Christianity, but their true character might be known by the lack of any practical demonstration of faith.

Seeing the look of disappointment upon the stranger's face, the Colonel went on, for the Colonel was not a hard-hearted man and liked well enough to please:

"Here, take this five-dollar note and apply it to such needs of the poor in our own land as you may choose. Mind you, in our own land. Home Missions, my dear sir. But foreign missions — Oh, well, good-afternoon."

The Colonel bade George admit no more clergymen, and settled back in his chair, still meditating upon that long-coveted coat-of-arms. "A treasure! A treasure!" he said. "I would I might meet my illustrious ancestors face to face, unknown though they are personally to me. It may be one of the satisfactions of the blessed future life to do so. Happy meeting indeed, if such recognition be ours and theirs!"

How Colonel Wheeler expected to gain admittance to "the blessed future life" it would be difficult to understand, since there is but one known entrance by which any man, whether he be the happy possessor of a coat-of-arms or no, may find it. He belonged to a rare class who take it as

a matter of course that they themselves will be admitted on account of something, they don't know exactly what, but something, probably for the reason that they have never committed murder, or broken into a house, or been for any cause an inmate of the penitentiary.

Wheeler, as he sat there meditating, would have kicked a man out of the room who had dared insinuate that he, Colonel Wheeler, was in danger of missing his way in the matter of gaining the blessed future state. He began to doze, thinking so hard about his noble ancestry and the coat-of-arms. His bald head nodded as if saluting the emblazoned herald, and — it was nothing to him that he snored as hard as any workman in Deep Gutter ever dared snore. The door was closed between him and Deep Gutter snorers.

CHAPTER XII.

COLONEL WHEELER'S INTERVIEW WITH HIS ANCESTORS.

COLONEL WHEELER was not aware of falling asleep. It was not his habit to sleep in his chair, nor was he given to dreams. Howbeit he slept and also dreamed. It is possible that his dream came to him "through the multitude of business," according to the Good Book, and it is likewise possible that it came to him "from the Lord," also according to the Good Book. However that may be, the dream came and left its impression, as will be seen.

He was gazing still at his new treasure and wishing that he might leap the gray walls of the twelfth century and trail his

genealogy on the other side, when the shield began to move backward. Back, back it went, with a swiftness that made its pursuer dizzy. It dashed with break-neck speed down the abruptness of centuries, precipitated itself across chasms of lost years, rolled through the dust of wasted deserts, and brought up on the shore of Britain in some dead, early-forgotten year of our Lord.

Out of breath with following it, Colonel Wheeler threw himself on the white sand of the beach and watched the surf. Stilted sea birds craned their long necks to look at him, and nothing was familiar.

Suddenly he was aware of voices. He leaned upon his elbow, still panting, and looked around him. From every direction came naked savages. They came stealthily on bare tiptoe. They were looking intently, but not at him. The glistening shield on the shore attracted them, the shield with the wild boar and the ass in mortal combat, the same that Colonel Wheeler had followed over illimitable distances. One of the savages bent his bow to shoot, aiming at the boar. It was the first likeness the savage had ever seen. How could he know that it was not the real animal? Suddenly another savage pointed his long finger at Colonel Wheeler, who was as motionless as the shield.

To say that he was mentally stunned, but faintly describes the condition of his mind. He was frozen by fear, congealed into a shrinking shape without possible animation. He could only see, looking with wide-open, unblinking eyes at what soon swelled to an army of savages. They came toward him, all pointing at him.

men, women and children. They were hideous. Their bodies were painted blue, and they leered out of eyes that held no beam of human light. They were not beastly; they were demoniacal, if demons exist such as men conjecture and draw likenesses of.

The moveless man looked in the distance and saw what were like caves, out of which savages came and, running, ate raw flesh, tearing it with their nails. Their forms drew nearer until their fingers touched the face of the man leaning upon his elbow. The touch thrilled him with a new horrible sense, but he was still powerless to move.

"Who are you?" asked the savages in concert, in a speech which might have been the victim's mother-tongue, so well did he understand, though never having heard it. He was still moveless but for his answer, and his answer was in the same tongue.

"I am Colonel Wheeler, of the illustrious family of Wheelers. Yonder is my shield."

"Oh! Ah!" they all exclaimed in concert, "Our Descendant!" And they patted him on the top of his bald head, leaving red finger-marks. It made him tingle with terror all over his body, and sent rivulets of horror into his very soul. In fact, both body and soul were in a state of extreme panic, yet he could not move.

Suddenly the attention of the savages was averted from their "Descendant" by the approach of a little boat upon the sea. It came gliding into the bay as noiseless as a shaft of sunlight.

The little boat held one figure. It neared the shore and the figure stood erect

upon the stand. It held in its right hand a Book. Its left hand was lifted to heaven. Thither also was turned the face.

"Who are you?" asked the savages in concert of the figure on the shore.

"I am a herald of Good Things," was the answer. "I would read to you in the Book."

While he turned the leaves, a weird old woman, with face like a mummy's and whose whole bare skin was like a mummy cloth, with form bent like a quarter-moon, touched the stranger on the cheek with the tip of her finger. Then she tasted of the touch, putting her finger to her tongue. "He is good," she said.

While the stranger was yet reading, fagots were brought and the words of the Book were blended with wild chants, only the words which were read by the stranger having a meaning: "Go ye into all the world."

Still Colonel Wheeler leaned upon his elbow on the glistening sea-sand, and he knew by the smell which met his nostrils that he was yet alive.

After a while the savages turned to him, wiping their mouths on their bare arms, drawing them across their lips. Then they pointed at him with their unctuous fingers, touching him on breast and cheek and limb. "Our Descendant," they said in concert. "We are your Ancestors, Colonel Wheeler."

Another boat came gliding over the water and into the bay. A solitary figure like the first stepped upon the shore, under his right arm the Book, and in his face the light of a Divine courage. He might have been a kinsman of the clergy-

man who had called upon Colonel Wheeler for a donation, so like seemed the two. The savages pressed up to the stranger and asked in concert, "Who are you?"

"A herald of better things," was the answer. "I would read to you in the Book."

While he read, not noting what was going on about him, the altar was prepared for sacrifice, and the words of the Book blended with the swish of sharp instruments, and Colonel Wheeler listened. "Behold, I see Jesus!" floated out into the blue waves silver-crowned, and up into the blue heaven star-garlanded, and Colonel Wheeler was left alone with his Ancestors.

Then the savages came back to where he lay, and they wondered that he did not move, and they touched him while they laughed, calling him their "Dear Descendant."

Afterward there came another little boat with its solitary figure. It landed upon the beach as the others had done, and the savages asked, "Who are you?"

"I am a herald of better things!" was the answer as before. "I would read to you out of the Book."

Then the naked, painted men and women pressed up to him, and the little children stretched on tiptoe, creeping into his arms, all to see what was in the Book. And the stranger read, "Behold, I see Jesus," as his predecessor had done.

"Who is Jesus?" asked the savages in concert. And the little children piped "Who is Jesus?" while they gathered fagots.

And the stranger never lifted his eyes

toward the fagots, but kept on reading. And he read far into the night, and all day and all the month and all the year. And the fagots were never lighted. And the savages put on clothes of skins like our first Parents, their remote ancestors, and they learned of the stranger with the light of heaven in his face, how to read the Book. And they planted trees for shade, and vines and bulbs for food, and they came to love one another. And they asked questions of the earth, and the sea, and the sky, always with their hands on the Book. And they built them houses, and they looked heavenward as the stranger had. And they died, some of them, with the words of the Book upon their lips.

And while Colonel Wheeler looked, the army of savages grew into a greater army of agriculturists and scientists and artists; and they painted their bodies no longer with blue clay, but they painted beautiful pictures instead, some of these being of a Wonderful Child and its Mother, the Child with a halo about its head. And they also made for themselves coats-of-arms, loving heraldry. And they said to the stranger, "There are other savages back on other shores; go, read to them out of the Book." And he went.

Colonel Wheeler, lying there on the white sand, looked on, and he saw other strangers come to the beach in boats, always with the Book in their right hand, and their faces heavenward. He remembered the clergyman who had asked him for a donation to "help the remnant of a neglected race," and he moved upon his elbow, to draw a note for a larger amount than he had ever counted. The moving

roused him, and Colonel Wheeler of the Illustrious Family of Wheelers opened his eyes. He was sitting in his great, soft chair, the coat-of-arms in its place, and the library aglow with all the contributions of wealth. He saw dust glisten on his sleeve, and he brushed it away, thinking it the white sea-sand which he had just left. He looked for the strand and the little boats and the solitary figures, but they were not in sight. He looked for a remnant of the savages, his honorable and honored Ancestors, but they were somewhere on the shore of Britain in some dead and early-forgotten year of our Lord.

He arose, and turned the emblazoned coat-of-arms to the wall. Then he rang the bell for George.

"Find the man, the clergyman, who came this afternoon."

George returned, bringing the astonished clergyman.

"My brother," the Colonel said warmly, "I have made a mistake. Return to me the note for five dollars."

The clergyman handed it to him, taking it from between the leaves of a little Book which was in his pocket.

The late dreamer tore it into bits, and made out another, for a larger amount than the clergyman had ever received before from combined sources.

"Take this," Colonel Wheeler said, "and apply it to the needs of that neglected race of which you told me. Apply it soon, in the name of Jesus, and when you want more come to me."

The clergyman fell on his knees. "We thank thee, O Father, that we have thee for our Ancestor, and that all nations who have wandered from thee are coming back

to find thee, according to thy precious Word."

When Colonel Wheeler next met Alfred Slocomb, Esq., he said hastily, as if afraid the confession would elude him, "I, too, have been offering the Holy One bitter vinegar all my life." And then, quoting Slocomb's slip which his typewriter had printed by his dictation, "I have sinned against heaven; make me as one of thy hired servants."

And so did the force become infectious, and another of Silver City's men of means develop a new character according to the will of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHAT WINTER BROUGHT TO DEEP GUTTER AND ELSEWHERE.

"SEE to it, please, Mr. Christy, that no man is out of employment in that neighborhood this winter, and if there are women who depend upon their labor, let none suffer. I have resources, and work for all can be had. Perhaps a little work for the boys would do no harm."

This was what Colonel Wheeler was saying to William Christy one Sabbath after the Sunday-school was dismissed. The Colonel, very strange to say, by the operation of a certain imperative law following the new character which had developed in him, began to take an active interest in his fellow-creatures. He was of a cheerful nature by birth in the first place, and by grace in the second place. He reasoned on this wise: "If I have squandered more than half my life already, but have repented me of the waste, I need not weaken my power for future good by

continually referring to the past, and brooding over the years that are behind me. I will take my heart in my hand and be glad. Who knows but my life may be a long one? Even if short, I will make its little length broad and its height corresponding, so that I may not live in vain."

And he did not live in vain. Commencing with the terrors of that first winter following his change, he set to work, through certain youthful and merry committees, to help make life worth living well for the inhabitants of his own city, chiefly operating in Deep Gutter neighborhood, since these were the poorest and the least cultured, and, I might add, the most deserving.

These people were learning to make the most of small things. Mrs. Eliza Stubbs economized in the use of soap by utilizing her own and her neighbors' wood ashes, therewith concocting a weak but effectual compound for removing stains from linen and grease from kitchen floors. In like manner, economizing in the small supply of mental luxuries or necessities which they possessed, the whole population in the immediate vicinity of the chapel utilized their own and their neighbors' good cheer, thereby concocting an element both labor-saving and effective in braving the vicissitudes of a cold and stormy season.

Paul Silver had not carried with him his merry face and mirth-loving heart in vain. These were as infectious among the people as measles or chicken-pox, the condition being highly communicable from one to another. His co-workers being of the same mind as himself, the art

of having "good times" was especially cultivated. If a long face or a wry face was discovered, the cause was sought and a lotion applied to relieve the congested feature.

A vigilance committee, composed of several residents of the neighborhood and Paul Silver, chairman, directed political and domestic and religious conversations, changing the nature of these always adroitly when a face showed the symptoms previously mentioned. Discontent and envy sneaked in if they came at all, and were ultimately stoned out of the neighborhood. Not all in a day of course, but by stations of degrees.

"If we knew the troubles and anxieties and annoyances of the rich," Paul Silver said to the Monday Evening Conversation Class, "we should compare our pleasant lot with theirs most favorably. Think of what a man must suffer, thinking all the time of how dreadful it would be to have all his property disappear in a day and he to have absolutely nothing left of any importance save regret that he had not laid by wit and good-cheer and clear accounts with his fellow-men and his Maker. Think of what a doleful life for women to lead, sitting up all night — not to nurse the sick or to give a drink of water to restless children, nor to sew garments for a pittance that they may buy bread for dear ones, but to dance and display white arms as cold as any beggar's, and to make other women envy them, and to mar and despoil the pedestal upon which all womanhood stands. I tell you, my friends, envy is for the thoughtless rich, not for the thoughtful poor. The rich are often friendless, suspicious, and

very, very poor of those things that make life the most abundant of good."

"I don't envy 'em!" remarked Absalom Davis, father of Dick.

"Nor I." "Nor I," came from others of the meeting.

"It is not enough that we do not envy them," Silver said; "we must love them, and pray for them. If all the complaining poor took to prayer for the rich and selfish, how long do you suppose it would take to change the character of the two classes? We hear a good deal about the duty of everybody to pray for the poor and weak-minded and weak-bodied. It is just as much the duty of us all to pray for the rich and strong-minded and strong-bodied. And there are great, noble souls among the rich who are God's own Greathearts, fighting the battles for right and common good as no poor, moneyless man can do. Think of these sometimes, and pray for them especially. And while we are all praying, some bright day we shall all, rich and poor, shine in the light of God. Then we shall understand that it is not by the might of envy or the strength of possession, but by Love, that personal and combined character is to be reformed and maintained. Our dear Maker has made it impossible for any of us to live an independent life. We are born twins and triplets and families and a whole world, and we grow up together, well-formed some of us, or misshapen and weak. Still, being of the same kin, we are not ashamed each of the other, nor quarrelsome, nor greedy, nor lazy. That is, we are not so if we are sensible, honest and Christlike people."

These Monday Evening Conversation

Meetings were not always led by Paul Silver. He took "turn about" with his friends in Deep Gutter, and this made the meetings very interesting and unique. O'Shay took his turn, reluctantly to be sure, and very naturally the conversation took the character of his own special vocation in life.

One evening, when the sleighing was particularly fine and the meeting had just convened, there came down the street the sound of merry voices, song and jingling of bells, the tramp on the frozen snow of horses' feet, and a sudden silence in front of the chapel. Christy and Joseph Silent went out to see. They found a party of young folks from up-town, who had strayed into the neighborhood by mistake or intention, on the lookout for "fun" of whatever sort. Being told that this was a Conversation Meeting, they immediately expressed a desire to attend. There being no objection, they accordingly did so, a dozen well-dressed, fun-loving, rosy-cheeked young men and damsels occupying some chairs nearest the stove, since they were cold and desirous of being in the background. "The management" went right on with the meeting. These people were so simple of thought, and had been so trained by those in charge, that the presence of a few strangers disconcerted them not a whit.

"I find that we have a great many things in common with the rich," observed O'Shay, the leader. "For instance, there is bread. I can make just as good bread at five cents a good pound loaf as any cook on Mansion Avenue."

O'Shay could not resist the temptation of advertising his business even in a Con-

versation Meeting. It was not considered out of order, since better-informed men than he were known to practise the same economy of time and cost in other and more cultured circles.

"The rich and poor, the young and old, need bread, and I have found, by carefully compiled statistics," (this high-sounding set of English words came near getting away with O'Shay's tongue) "that fully one-third of the human family spend the whole of their time bread-making."

There was a visible wave of astonishment which moved over the audience at these important statistics, and O'Shay saw that he had made a mark as a conversationalist.

"As for pies," he said, "I can make better pies at five cents each than you ever set tooth in. There is a knack at making pies some cooks never get on to. For instance, always put a pinch of salt in the fruit, and don't cook the fruit all to pulp; have some shape to it and milling for the teeth. And bind the edges of the pie plate with cambric wet with water; the binding will tear right off when the pie is done, and the juice will be all in the pie instead of in the bottom of the oven. When the juice does run out in the bottom of the oven, don't go to scraping it, all sticky and brown; but wait till it's burnt to a crisp, and then you can sweep it out."

Bread and pies being about all the topics for thought that O'Shay ever had in his possession, he was listened to with great interest, especially by the young strangers, who were able only with difficulty to repress their merriment.

"Your pies are cheap enough," said Mrs. Stubbs; "but I think it's a mistake

about having them half done. I say bake a pie till it's done. I'm not saying anything against your pies, Mr. O'Shay. You make good pies, but I just ventured an opinion."

"Pies are not a necessity," observed Amanda Stout. "If folks wouldn't eat so many pies, I wouldn't have a call for so much of my massey-use. Pies go against the stomach and cause hives and bad temper and nightmares. As for bread, that's good, and, as the speaker remarked, is common to the rich and poor like air and water."

"I like pie," came from Pete Mooney, who, with many others present, felt his appetite being sharpened by references to so toothsome but scarce an article of diet.

"Don't you think, Mr. O'Shay, that houses are a greater necessity than bread?" asked a carpenter who, of course, saw in his trade what was all-important. "Now if it wasn't for houses this cold weather, there couldn't be anybody warm enough to eat bread. Folks would freeze, and your bakery wouldn't have any customers. In my opinion houses are more important than bread, and I can build just as good houses as the next man; and I can mend old houses cheap, too, doing it of evenings after the day's work is done."

"I think washing is more important than anything else," observed Eliza Stubbs. "Cleanliness is next to godliness. Nobody can enjoy bread or pies or houses, if there's more dirt about them than either."

And so the "conversation" went on. Dogs were discussed, and the wastefulness

of keeping them about, especially for those who can hardly buy bread enough for the children.

"Better give the dogs to the pound-master," advised David Sanders, an old man with white hair and the sign of very large experience in his keen eye. "I say give the dogs to the crows or the pound-master. The poorer a man is, the more dogs he keeps. The same way with the cats. I'll venture there are more starved, mean-looking dogs and cats in this neighborhood than a man can count in —"

"Don't you say anything against dogs!" came from a woman in the rear who was knitting hard on an odd-looking pair of double mittens. "A good watch-dog's a necessary thing to have. I don't know what I should do without my watch-dog."

Now this woman was known to have nothing in her shanty but two chairs and a table and a bed and a few dishes, with occasionally some bread and potatoes, and what her dog was engaged in "watching" was a conundrum. However, she kept the dog.

In this original and entertaining manner the evening was passed, as was many an evening in the chapel during that and other winters.

It was better than being on the street, or in their scantily-warmed homes, grumbling, it might be, at their hard lot. "If only we can teach these people to spend their evenings profitably, we shall do a great deal to make the character of the poor better than it has the credit of being," Christy had said to his friends; and so these young men denied themselves the advantages of the cultured circles of

a great city, that they might help another class.

Then came a resumé of the conversation by Paul Silver. He said he was glad when O'Shay had referred to bread being a common necessity to the rich and poor. "Our great and loving heavenly Father, who spent all of his time providing for his children, knew how much they all need bread, and so he sent the Lord Jesus into the world to be Bread for the whole world. Make good bread, Mr. O'Shay, and while you are moulding it and making it sweet and light, think of that other and Eternal Loaf broken for you and for the world—that Loaf which a part of the world is famishing for the need of, refusing to partake of it."

It was simply said, but the words left their impression, as all words do leave impressions, some more than others; a fact to be both glad of and sorry for. There was not a housemother who heard but would think about them when she was cutting the slices for the children; and O'Shay himself, without intention, would doubtless recall them when he took his loaves from the long oven and thought how good they were at five cents a loaf.

"And I think," went on Silver, "that it is almost as necessary to have a house as to have bread, as my friend the carpenter remarked. It is our heavenly Father's intention that all his creatures shall have a dwelling. Animals and insects have their houses, and we certainly must have them, especially in winter time, or freeze, as the carpenter intimated. Some of the inhabitants of the world are houseless from choice, when it comes to housing their souls. Jesus is our house of refuge

from suffering and distress of every sort. And, friends, I could but think, while Mrs. Stubbs was remarking about the necessity of being clean, how many there are in the world who might be pure and beautiful and white as snow if only they would think about it and want to be clean. It is God's will that every one of us shall be clean, and that we shall help to make one another clean."

The merriment had faded out of the faces of the strange group by the stove, listening as they had been to this peculiar Conversation Meeting, the women knitting and sewing, and the children playing quiet games in a far corner, and the men some of them arguing in low tones on their own account, as occasion offered. The meeting was conducted on such ingenious and hap-hazard plans, though orderly withal, that it was an evening long to be remembered by the gay visitors who, until now, had never given a thought as to how the inhabitants of Deep Gutter neighborhood could spend their time of winter evenings.

Just as the women began to fold their knitting and the men to untilt their chairs, the leader of the group of strangers motioned to Paul Silver, who in turn motioned to O'Shay, and he, with very important and self-conscious air, disappeared from the building. In a few moments he returned, bearing on a huge tray all the pies which he happened to have in his restaurant. How he happened to have so many, he could not tell, he said, unless it was that a voiceless incentive had prompted. Lest these should not be enough for the whole company of men, women and children and visitors, the

sleigh at the door was heard to rush away and return, when in was borne another stack of pies, quite enough and to spare. These all at the expense of the merry-hearted visitors, who partook with the crowd, and were afterwards the recipients of a vote of thanks.

Not a person who was present representing Deep Gutter neighborhood would forget this little episode of the pies, coming as they did from so unlooked-for a quarter. And the faithful, of whom there was a large number, would remember these visitors in their prayers; so, unconsciously, hastening the day referred to by Paul Silver in his opening speech of the evening, "when we shall all shine with the light of God." So insignificant a trifle as a stack of pies thus working wonders in a world where wonders are the order of the day!

CHAPTER XIV.

SOME OTHER THINGS THAT WINTER BROUGHT.

"IF THE church is the Lamb's wife, the Sunday-school is his child," said Col. Wheeler to Alfred Slocomb one day when they met in the latter's office to discuss certain things connected with their new experience. "Take that work in Deep Gutter. First, it was a little Sunday-school conducted by William Christy and his wife and Paul Silver and the young Silents. Just a Sunday-school and nothing more, a handful of children. Then came in the older people of the neighborhood, and every day connections with the Sunday-school took place by these Conversation Meetings, and Natural History

and Botany Classes. And now comes the Winter School. That Winter School is good," the Colonel said enthusiastically. "I am going to put up an addition to the chapel on the west, to be known as the Winter School Wing, and every stroke of the work shall be done by the Deep Gutter people, if possible."

And Colonel Wheeler who, six months before, cared for nothing so much as "his ancient and honorable lineage," did cause a wing to be added to the old Appleville school-house on the west, so that the people who lived in the vicinity could have a larger winter evening resort. The carpenter who thought houses were of more importance than bread was the master-builder, and he proved his word good in regard to his architectural skill. It was nothing elaborate, but a room which could hold three hundred, with side alcoves. It connected with the other parts of the building, and was well warmed by a supply of coal in the cellar that was never known to run out in the Colonel's day — and he is alive yet.

The Winter School was similar in character to the one kept in Appleville years before by William Christy and his associates, and it was carried on by the same "management." Its object was to interest people old and young in what was all about them, and to so occupy the mind that there was no time nor space for useless thoughts. "Winter is thought's harvest time," William Christy said to his class, his class composing every man, woman and child in Deep Gutter who could get to the chapel, besides quite a number of another class who began to find out that there was a good deal of

the best sort of fun going on in that quarter.

Even the Colonel's son, at home for the winter on account of failing health, so it was said, but really on account of having had too much money in boyhood — even this dudish young man came to be interested. To be sure, his concave chest and thin brain were not at all in his favor, but, coming first with his father and only to please his father, he soon found something fascinating in the situation. "The Deep Gutter people are so interesting, don't you know?"

This young man of too much money was a proof before the winter was over that "God is no respecter of persons," but can give even to a thin-brained, dudish young man as new a heart and consequent change of character as he ever gave to Alfred Slocomb, Esq., or to any other of his dearly-loved family.

How William Christy, Superintendent of Public Instruction in Silver City, had the time to attend to this Winter School in Deep Gutter, was a puzzle to his friends who did not know that Time, being a servant to its Maker, seems to double and treble its actual measurement for those who would make the most of it for Jesus' sake. An hour may be an hour and nothing more to one man; while to another, an hour is a whole series of hours, judging by the amount of work achieved.

The Winter School flourished. The subjects studied were such as every-day life suggested. The works of Him "who giveth snow like wool and scattereth hoar frost like ashes," and whose word "fire and hail, snow and vapors, and stormy wind fulfill," were examined under mi-

croscopes and with alternating degrees of heat and cold, till the veriest child of the school could have told you, if asked, that ice and snow and frost are winter flowers blooming and expanding in marvelous beauty and form.

Winter clouds and the feathers they drop from their tilted aprons wherewith to cover dreariness, the effect of invisible winds that whistle to their playfellows around the mansion and the hut, the dull, still, dry, piercing cold that nips and tingles the fingers which touch it, all these were topics studied, making old and young among the pupils in love with winter as they never were in love with any season before.

"Bless my soul!" said the Colonel to Alfred Slocomb, "it's a sin and a shame the way I have spent my life, especially the winters. Well-housed and well-fed, with a library the half of whose volumes I couldn't have read in six months, gay friends, clubs, everything to make my fifty winters pass too rapidly to suit me — and to think that I never gave a thought to how the poor and destitute of libraries and clubs and roaring fires over a great house, ever managed to spend their winter evenings, stifled as the most of them are in close rooms overpeopled, no books to speak of, no clubs, only fire enough to keep them from freezing. It's no wonder to me that they grow morose and bitter of thought, and unlovely to live by or to meet anywhere. I declare, Slocomb, I am going to add a library to this Winter School, and a piano and an organ. Only yesterday I heard Beth Silent say that if there were instruments here, she could give a musicale every week and maybe

twice. It's a capital idea, this, and bless the girl for the loan of it! A musicale for Deep Gutter! And we can interest the uptown young folks, I'm sure, so that there shall be quite a display of talent. There's nothing like good music to chase care away. What if the people hereabouts come to the chapel every evening in the week, to keep warm you know, and acquainted, and jolly? I'm in favor of it." And the jovial Colonel laughed as heartily at thought of his plans as if he were contemplating the veriest joke in the world.

"Colonel," said Slocomb, laughing himself at the new character which his old-time friend was most certainly in possession of, "Colonel, why are not you and I still making money along the old lines? We were honest, as honesty goes, you know, and we might have kept right on; or that is the way it seems, isn't it?"

"Well, now, Slocomb, that's a hard condition to answer. I'll speak for myself, though. To tell the truth, I haven't any heart in it. In short, I haven't any time for it. You can't make money successfully if you haven't any heart in the business."

"Yes," said Slocomb, "that's true, Colonel. And you see, while I was in the business I came near dying with heart disease, or so the doctor said; and it's risky, terribly risky;" and then he laughed at the thought of his "fatty degeneration." Since he had spent less time sitting in his office counting figures and imaginary figures, he had lost much of his weight in flesh and fatty tissue, so that really his physical condition had been improved by the condition of his character.

As the winter came on, Faith Silent's Saturday Botany Class changed to a Kitchen Class in conjunction with her sister, Mrs. Beulah Christy. "I'd rather go to that Kitchen Class than to any show that ever comes along," was the remark of Eliza Stubbs to Amanda Stout, Chiropracist (with the emphasis on the middle syllable) and Massey-use. "There's lots of fun in it. Why, I always supposed that a City Mission was a sad sort of affair where the people spent their time prayin' and readin' solemn books. But this Deep Gutter Mission's a regular daisy, as the boys say. - Yesterday Mrs. Christy was showin' me how to cook the odds and ends of butcher's meat — hit-or-miss meat, she called it — a little pork and a handful of mutton and beef and veal, such pieces as the butcher heaps up in a corner, good and sweet, but undesirable because there was so little of any one kind. Well, she boiled 'em all together after skimming the pot, with just enough water to keep 'em wet, and then she turned the mess out and 'abstracted the bones,' as she calls pickin' 'em out. And then she puts the bits of meat and their gravy together and poured the whole in a pan and set it out o' doors to cool. In less than an hour she turned that pan topsy-turvy and there was the prettiest loaf of meat you ever saw, the pieces all shimmering and shaking in their own jell in the jolliest way. That was a whole pan full, that cost ten cents in money. A pan full of livin' beauty, as the poet might say. While we were at work washin' up the dishes, after that suet cake was done that we cut up for the refreshments at the musicale last night, a lot o'

boys come round the winder lookin' roguish and teasin' like, and what should Mrs. Christy do but give 'em all the cake-pans to clean out, passin' of 'em out the winder, and laughin' merry. And then, when they had cleaned the pans of all the sweets they could get off, she gave 'em a whole little cake she had put away on the top shelf. She told me she just loved boys. She said she had three brothers when she was a girl, and they was the 'loveliest terrors' you ever see. Her brother Joe, she said, (that's Professor Joseph Silent, you know,) was a awful tease, and kept always playin' with bugs an' things, a-countin' their eyes an' feet an' findin' out where they lived and what they lived on when they was at home. She said she never sees any livin' insect but she thinks of a big, awkward boy and how he always loved the things. And she told me all about her brothers — the cripple, you know, that died, and John, you know him; an' when she was done talkin' about boys, me an' the other women that was there just loved boys, too, as we hadn't been doin', an' we looked out the winder at them little fellers in the snow scrapin' in the cake-pans, an' didn't feel a bit like cuffin' of 'em, as we commonly did. I tell you, Amanda Stout, there's nothin' like that Kitchen School."

And Amanda Stout assented, saying she enjoyed going there to knead the bread when they were going to have sandwiches for the next evening's musicale refreshments, because her hands were so large and strong. "Just made for kneadin' bread and Massey-use," she explained.

"Ain't it lovely!" little Molly Davis

was saying one day to Polly Stubbs, sitting in the sunshine on a teeter in the chapel yard. "Ain't it lovely that we are goin' to have our Little Girls' Kitchen Class every other Saturday all winter? And Miss Beth Silent she's goin' to teach it. She an' that other girl what comes here from one of them fine houses on Mansion Avenue. I don't know her name, but I know her face."

"Yes, it's bloomin' lovely," Polly replied, kicking a fresh hole in the snow at her end of the teeter. "I never see so much sugar and eggs and such, in my life. And then she showed us how to make bean soup, a new way from what mother makes it, all stewed up soft and squeezed through a colander so't would just slip down your throat as easy, without any skins all tough and choky to stick in your teeth and throat. I know just how to make that sort o' soup now, and I'm goin' ter make it next Saturday for dinner all by myself. I can get the beans for five cents and the milk for three, and father said he'd give me the money 'cause he was proud to have a little girl big enough to know how to make bean soup, the real delicious way;" and Polly smacked a taste of the imaginary soup, jumping off from her end of the teeter in a flash that sent Molly into the next snow-drift behind at the other end.

The teeter the little girls were sitting on belonged to the chapel, being of course a "Mission teeter" put there on purpose for little girls to play on in winter time and discuss Kitchen Schools and bean soup.

On the other side of the chapel was a line of snow-men, stiff and straight, in all

sorts of shapes, also "Mission snow-men" having been erected by the boys of Deep Gutter Sunday-school during a week-day session at the suggestion of Alfred Slocomb, Esq. This very singular man had offered a prize of considerable importance to the boy who should make the best snow-man and have the same on exhibition the following Tuesday. And here were the men, "for all the world like real men," observed Paul Silver, who was one of the judges. Some of them staunch and straight, awry with nothing and nobody; others one-sided and bent and cowardly-looking; and others still, toppling over as if they were tipsy with drinking so much snow-water or something. As the judges passed down the line, Paul Silver knocked a long pipe out of the mouth of one of the men, remarking as he did so that except for the pipe that man would be all right, but a pipe in the mouth of a snow-man spoiled him, as a pipe spoiled any man, whether he were made of snow or flesh-and-blood. There was another, leaning towards its fellow, scarcely able to stand alone, holding out its hand in an imploring way as snow-men will which are not built on the right foundation; and Paul Silver said, as he came to this one, all the various would-be prize-winners standing about with wide-open eyes waiting for the verdict:

"This man looks as if he would like to borrow something of that other man beside him. It's a bad habit for snow-men, or other men, to borrow. This man will not be awarded the prize on account of his apparent character. Debt is a bad thing in any community. A snow-man and every other man ought to stand on his

own legs. This thing of borrowing, or going in debt to the grocer or the butcher or the baker, spoils a man. If it were a woman it would be just as bad. Count this man out."

This weekly award of prizes for snow-men was a great boon to Deep Gutter boys. It taught competition and rivalry and ambition and industry at play and accuracy, and "lots and lots of fun," as the boys themselves said.

"I suppose if St. Paul had been associated with Deep Gutter Sunday-school," Christy remarked to Slocomb, "he would have said, 'Every boy of you work for the prize in this snow-man competition.' What he did say was, 'So run that ye may obtain,' running being the principal game where he lived at that time. 'So run that ye may obtain.' A hint at some sorts of recreation which deep Gutter neighborhood is profiting by this winter. There's a prize at the end of the race, Slocomb; I wonder if the man you and I are building will come in for the prize?"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CLUB AND A CHARACTER MEETING.

"WHY don't Slocomb and Wheeler come to the club any more?"

Smythe poured another glass of wine for himself, the red liquor bubbling and gurgling out of the long neck of the bottle as if it would answer the question if only it could make itself understood.

"I really don't know," Browning replied. "It is something I cannot comprehend. I met the two gentlemen yesterday and rallied them on their delin-

quencies, and the most I got was a smile, only Slocomb said, 'Bless your soul, Browning, we haven't time to go!'

Browning leaned back comfortably in the great chair and lighted his cigar. The blue film blended with that of a hundred other cigars, and together the misty clouds rolled about the ceiling in wanton glee as if pleased with what was going on beneath them.

"These cheroots are excellent," Browning said, lighting one for his friend. "Now, why, in your opinion, do not the two gentlemen named come to the club any more?"

"I thought you knew, else I shouldn't have asked you. My asking was only banter. Slocomb and Wheeler have left us for parts unknown."

"Left us for parts unknown?" the other replied, looking his astonishment. "I saw both of them only this morning, Smythe."

"Oh, yes, they are with us, but not of us. I tell you they've left for parts unknown. Parts as unknown to this club as the vicinity of the South pole. And you'll never see them back on this soil. At least that's my guess."

"Explain yourself, Smythe."

"Did you ever hear of the Bible, Browning—that old, obsolete, fanatical book, all cobwebs and exploded theories and ancient dogmas?"

"Don't you say anything to me personally against that Book?" Browning replied to his friend. "My mother lived and died by it, and I would as soon hear her memory reviled as to hear that Book reviled. I never made any practical use of it myself, nor believed in it the way my

mother did, but I respect it because she loved it."

"Excuse me, Browning," Smythe said. "That, too, was only banter of mine to find out where you stand, the Bible not being a common topic of conversation in this club with any other intention than to traduce it. But we were speaking of Slocomb and Wheeler. Well, they've taken to reading the Bible."

"You surprise me, Smythe! I would as soon have thought you guilty of such nonsense! And do you think the affair permanent?"

"Most certainly I do. I had a long talk with Slocomb the other day, and he told me all about it."

"All about what?"

"About that mysterious, inexplicable change that has come over him. And it's no mistake, Browning; you might as well say black isn't black, or white isn't white. He is a different man. He has a new face. I've noticed it in others. You can't call it superstition when it's perfectly perceptible to you and me and any other who cares to investigate the matter. I wish I knew what it is that causes this change. It is possible the phenomenon rests upon some occult science little understood at present, but bound to be traced to its source some day. Between you and me, Browning, I half way believe there is something as true as it is mysterious about this faith or belief or conviction or superstition, or whatever you've a mind to call it. There's Wheeler now. I've heard him say more against the Bible and 'that goody-goody class of people who believe it,' than any other man of the club; and yet he hugs it to his bosom now,

figuratively speaking, as if he had been charmed by some necromancer. And the two men have taken to going down to the slums Mission, as if they loved to associate with the miserable and coarse and dangerous. I say dangerous, Browning, for that class are dangerous, and I feel like carrying a pistol with me whenever I happen to go into the Deep Gutter district — which doesn't occur very often, I assure you. What it is that those two men have found in that neighborhood that can give them more satisfaction than they got in the club, I don't know. Whatever it is, it is powerful. Think of it, Browning! Two men as rich as Cræsus to suddenly change color, so to speak; to drop everything of the old order and exhibit a character directly opposite to anything they ever possessed before. You can't call it insanity."

"I call it fanaticism," Browning replied, drinking more wine.

"No, it isn't that, Browning. They never went to any fanatical preaching nor heard a mad, visionary harangue about the Bible, Slocomb told me. It was done just as quietly as the morning dawns in midsummer, and they can't explain it themselves; only they know it's a fact. I've a good mind to go to Deep Gutter myself to-morrow night. Slocomb asked me. There's to be a meeting of some sort — a Character Meeting, he said — and all the slum folks will be there. Come along with me; we shall be entertained anyhow."

"All right, Smythe, I'll go. It would be as good as a play, and maybe we can get on to this secret and communicate it to the club. Of course it's fanaticism of some sort. But you needn't think I'll

be taken in by it. Have some more wine?"

"No, thank you, no more wine to-night."

The regular Weekly Conversational Meeting in Deep Gutter chapel was well attended that night. There was a crisp frostiness in the air outside and a roaring fire in the chapel furnace, and, it was whispered, the ordinary "spread" after the meeting. There had been a new bell added to the hitherto voiceless belfry, and this bell had a tongue which wagged and wagged to the delight of all the young fry in the neighborhood and the satisfaction of the older inhabitants. It was the pleasing duty of the most studious and circum-spect boy in the Sunday-school to pull the rope that swung this new bell on each occasion when its clatter was in order, this duty to continue until said boy was superseded by a better one.

"We have the best hope in habit," William Christy had said to Paul Silver. "If a boy can form a habit under pressure of a reward, so much gained for him and others. After awhile, principle displaces habit, and you have a character standing on its own convictions."

Paul Silver stood before the inhabitants of Deep Gutter, and some who were not inhabitants, on his face that indescribable light before mentioned, which was neither a witless smile nor an affectation of mirth. He said:

"My dear friends, we have called this a Character Meeting because we have met to discuss character. 'Tis from high life that high characters are drawn; so wrote Pope, and upon this assumption we will

draw our character pictures. There have been changes in Deep Gutter neighborhood in the past year or two, as there have been changes all over God's world. Everywhere new characters are being made, old characters dying to give the better ones a place. Uptown, in the streets which glow with wealth and culture, characters have been transformed more startling than any we know about, if only we could be made acquainted with them. In all cities and countries where the Book that is so wonderful has been read to the loving of it, there have been marvelous changes in the hearts and lives of men and women and children; and our heavenly Father is glorified, and the world is made better, and lives so changed have become like beacon-lights to guide others. I mentioned the Book because there can be no beautiful true character which disbelieves it or neglects it. The poet Scott has said:

'For better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt or read to scorn.'

There are a good many people in this neighborhood who can say with Sheridan, 'I leave my character behind me.' But personal testimony as to one's own character is not desirable. Our object is to have statements from members of Deep Gutter Sunday-school as to the character of one another. A tree is known by its fruits, says the Good Book. A good character is known by what it really is, not by what the possessor of it may say about it. Now if to-night anyone can say a good word for somebody's character, let us hear it."

There was an agitated silence. Chairs hitched, feet shuffled, throats cleared

themselves, knitting-work was laid down, and the audience thought hard. Then Thomas Mooney got up and said, looking the chairman straight in the face:

"Mr. Silver, I can testify that one of my neighbors has a different character from what he had two years ago." Here he turned and faced Ira Davis, Dick Davis' father. "Everybody knows our two lots join hands on the west, Davis' and mine. We haven't much back-yard, either of us, but what there is, is open to view, so to speak. Well, my neighbor he used to take his boy Dick out there and lick him till it made me mad. The fact that Dick was bein' licked didn't make me mad—if a boy ever needed a sproutin' it was Dick Davis—but I got mad 'cause the old man would do it in the back-yard. I considered it a disgrace to have that kind of thing goin' on so near the house, and I told him so."

At this point Ira Davis was observed to pull desperately at his vest arm-hole, he having his thumb inserted in that locality, and his countenance presented longitudinal lines on its surface till silence from his quarter became practicably impossible.

"If the Chair please," he exclaimed, jumping to his feet, "I want to say right here that there has been a change in my neighbor the past year. He used to take his son Pete out in his back-yard as often as once a day and lick him right before me, tilted as I would be against the side of the house. Everybody knows our back-yards join hands on the east, and what is done in one is done in the other, on account of their small size. Now I never objected to Pete Mooney bein' licked in

them days, he bein' about as bad a boy as I ever see — as bad then!" — with strong emphasis on the word "then." "And it used to make me so mad; I considerin' it a disgrace to have such things goin' on so near my house."

Everybody was laughing heartily by this time, and the chairman said, by way of explanation: "My friends, what these two good neighbors wish to say is, that there has been a change in their particular quarter. There is no more 'licking' going on in either yard. There has been a change on the part of these respective fathers, we cannot doubt that; but that there has been a change on the part of the two boys who used to be the cause of so much unneighborly feeling, is equally true. A good father will almost surely have a good son, and a good son may count with almost as much certainty on having a good and gentle father. I venture to say that since the Sunday-school came to Deep Gutter, there has been less fault-finding between all the parents and children than ever before. 'Blessed are the peacemakers' applies just as much to parents and children as to men and nations."

"But my father's very different from what he used to be," came from Pete Mooney, playing a game of checkers in the children's corner, his friend, Dick Davis, supporting the other side of the checker-board.

"And so's my father different from what he used to be," echoed Dick Davis, and — "Crown him, Pete!" in the same breath as he moved a black "man" into the king-row.

"Yes, 'crown him, Pete!' " said the

chairman. "Crown every man who is different from what he used to be. We are glad of this impromptu testimony of the boys in favor of their respective fathers. Fathers are very precious to the great Father in heaven, who is all gentleness and kindness and wisdom and goodness. So also are boys very precious to him, boys with big hands and feet and ears, who are so full of fun that they boil right over with it and are sometimes mistaken for bad boys on account of the fun. It would be a lonesome world if it wasn't for the boys, though some people don't want them around."

"That's what it would!" came from Alfred Slocomb, Esq., who was looking fondly at his adopted son John, erstwhile "Cripple Johnnie."

"Well, I can bear testimony that Mr. Slocomb has changed, too," Johnnie said, standing on his beautiful crutches. "When I first saw him, as you all know, I was afraid of him and set my dog, 'Pa,' after him. But I love him now;" and Johnnie sniveled just a little bit in his old way, exactly as he did at the funeral of Bob Green, when Paul Silver had mentioned "angels" and "heaven" and "Cripple Johnnie" all in one breath.

"Thank God for this testimony!" said the chairman.

Amanda Stout had been noticed to move about uneasily, and she took the first opportunity to rise to her feet.

"My friends, I live pretty close to Eliza Stubbs, and I want to testify that her character has met with a change since I've been in business in Deep Gutter. She used to be called 'Shrew Stubbs' when I came here, but there ain't a person calls

her that now. She used to order old man Stubbs around and blame him for this, that and the other till he looked like a whipped dog. And the way she scolded them children was a caution. Even the baby come in for a share, till I was so tired of it I was 'most ready to take down my shingle. But I can testify that there has been a mighty change. Mis' Stubbs isn't like herself. And I'll tell you how she came to experience the change, if you want to know. There's a little closet off her lean-to where she puts the tubs and things of Sundays. She goes into that there closet and shuts the door, and when she comes out again her face shines and her voice is gentle-like, and — and — and — well, Eliza Stubbs ain't herself."

Eliza Stubbs, poor, hard-working, many-cared mother, who had pinched and saved all her life to make sure of a roof over her head, and a mouthful for the children, actually burst into tears. She hadn't an idea that anybody had noticed any change in her.

"I'm sure I'm a poor, tired, cross woman," she said, through her sobs, "and I don't think there's been much change for the better in me. I can see it in some other folks, though."

"Why, the character of Deep Gutter itself has changed!" the Chair observed. "It cannot help changing, with things so different. Now there is the gutter proper. It is swept in front of the houses every day, and the sidewalk is clean, and the front windows robbed of their old tattered lace curtains, and fresh plain shades in their place. That is, a good deal of Deep Gutter has changed; not all of it, to be sure, but a good deal of it."

"There are changes that cannot be seen," said Faith Silent; "little deeds of kindness nobody but Jesus takes any notice of, people being too busy with their own affairs. There are little closets like Mrs. Stubbs' closet, where hearts shut out the world and tell their troubles and failures to the One that helps."

"Well, I can testify to one thing," observed O'Shay, rising to his feet. "There's been a considerable change in the kids round here in the past year. They used to wear my patience all out, hookin' my victuals and daubin' up my winders and teasin' me for samples and such things. Now there's been a change for the better, and that there Sunday-school's at the bottom of it, I know."

"You bet there's been a change in O'Shay!" piped a little fellow in the rear of the house. "He used to lay for us and say he'd smash us, and give us pie with quinine and salts in it, and cake that was full o' sand, and everything that was mean. Now he's good to us."

This unlooked-for testimony on his behalf made O'Shay resolve in his grateful heart to make that little fellow a canned blackberry pie at the next baking.

"This looking out for the good things in one another's character is as our dear Lord would have it," said Paul Silver. "Faults of others are not our affairs, unless we try to help another overcome those faults. And even then, it is better to find a virtue to praise, than to speak of the faults. Deep Gutter people are not alone in striving to live better lives and to show forth their love to Jesus in acts that will please him. It is a great army the world over, and only a very few desert it. At

our next Conversation Meeting we will discuss the best way for children to bring up their parents."

There was an audible murmur as if to correct the speaker for a blunder, but Paul Silver said:

"There is no blunder in that announcement, my friends. Children have a responsibility in bringing up their parents, and the Book is full of good and useful advice in this particular. Parents owe a great deal to their children. Some parents are made bad because they have bad children. Our heavenly Father intended that children should be a great blessing, and they should think earnestly as to what influence they are having on their parents, so that when they meet the Lord Jesus some day and he says, 'My children, did you take good care of your parents and set them a good example?' the children will not hold down their heads in shame, remembering the times they had vexed them, and given them pain, and tempted them to do something that was wrong."

Following the Conversation came simple refreshments — plain bread and butter this time and hot chocolate.

Two gentlemen in the back of the room did not stay for the refreshments. They went away silent, each wondering in himself what was the mysterious, invisible principle that could so change character and make two different classes work for the saving of one another. It did not occur to these gentlemen that the neighborhood was at all dangerous. They parted without a word, astonished to find themselves interested in a thing and a people so foreign to their club.

CHAPTER XVI.

TWENTY-FIVE MILES FROM DEEP
GUTTER.

"PEARS to me this lookin'-glass is crooked, Sarah."

Sarah Small came up to her husband's side, and peeped into the glass.

"No, 'tain't crooked, father, not if I see straight."

"Well, something's crooked," said Josiah Small crossly. Then he continued to twist his mouth around to one side, and to draw down his upper lip, and stretch his chin, lathering his whole solemn visage from time to time and feeling the edge of the dull razor with his thumb, intent upon his customary Sunday morning shave. He surveyed the results of his tedious labor doubtfully, and said, "It ain't the sort of spring I'd like to see, Sarah. Sarah, I say! it ain't the sort of spring I'd like to see."

Sarah came in from the shed, bearing a mixture of corn cobs and chips in her apron, and dumped the same into the wood-box. Then she removed all the covers from the top of the stove, from whence poured a volume of black smoke, and filled the fire-box with the chips and cobs. Then she opened the oven and took a look at the fat old hen that lay on its side, roasting. Her husband was standing patiently waiting for the answer to his remark. Josiah Small had brought up his wife to answer his remarks, but she took her time.

"Well, father, I've heard you make that same remark a hundred times, springs, ever since I lived with you. I don't know how I'm to help it, if it ain't

the sort of spring you'd like to see. I've lived long enough to take the weather as it comes, and I ain't so old as you be by some years."

"Well, I would like to see one spring in my lifetime such as it ought to be. There's a thaw and a freeze, and a thaw and a freeze, and the buds start only to be nipped, and a person thinks it's time to plow one week and the next week there's a snow-storm. Settled weather is what we want."

"I don't see what you can complain of, father," his wife replied. "Last year's crops ain't sold yet, you know that; and what would you do with more?"

A fair young girl rose from the pan of potatoes she had been peeling, a girl who was the refined reproduction of both parents, and opened the oven door which her mother had just closed.

"Mother," she said, "wouldn't it be better to turn the chicken back up, so the juices will all run down into the breast? I read that in the books, and it looks reasonable. The breast is dry when it comes to the table sometimes, and it is owing to the fowl always being laid on its back or side."

"Fix it the way you want it, Florence," her mother said. "Where's the rutabagas and the beets?"

"They are all in cold water, mother, and here are the potatoes."

The Sunday dinner being well under way, the mother turned to the glass which her husband had just left, and took the one hair-pin from the very minute knot of hair on the back of her head. Then she grasped the oily, coarse comb and drew it through the meager supply of hair

twice, and replaced the hair-pin. She had then combed her hair for meeting, exactly as she had combed it for twenty years, and with the same comb.

Florence, the daughter, poured some water into the wash-pan and took it to her room. She had wished and wished that the kitchen might be excused from further duties as a dressing-room and lavatory, but without avail. As well could she succeed in inducing her parents to open the shut-up parlor for a living-room. They would bake bread, and roast chickens, and boil vegetables, and do the week's washing, and set the table, and shell the corn, and split the kindling, and doctor sick lamps, and read the almanacs, and receive neighborly company, and perform their ablutions, and comb their hair, in that one room. Had they not always done it? Florence sighed. The Sunday morning was very much as every Sunday morning had been since she could remember. Her father always grumbled when he was shaving; she had never known it to fail. They always had chicken or hen or duck or goose for dinner, with the accompanying vegetables.

The girl performed her simple toilet unconscious of the fact that she had the sweetest face in all Crab Apple Center, and hurried to her mother, who was calling, "It's time to go, Flora. Pa's waiting."

She took her place in the wagon that had never had a washing in its long lifetime, such a thing as washing a vehicle being unknown among the farmers of that region. If it were regularly greased, where wagons usually receive their oily encouragement to wag-on, and was the

occasional recipient of a shower, what more needed it? front of the meeting-house, shaking hands, and inquiring after "your folks"

Conversationless and spiritless, the three moved on a mile or more to the little church at the Center proper. There was a variety of traveling. The hilly part of the road was bare and hard enough. Between the up-grades were slush and mud and ruts and jolts. But the old horse, "Adam," was strong and the wagon was strong, and between the two the party arrived safely at the church. There was no belfry on the small structure. It was simply and solely a meeting-house where the farmers of the territory about it met, they and their families, as had been their lifelong habit.

Josiah Small drove directly to the fence behind the meeting-house, where he tied the horse, while Florence and her mother

climbed out, leaving long smutches of mud on their skirts from the wheels, which they vainly tried to remove by much rubbing. Other wagons very much like this one drove up to the fence and "hitched," their occupants walking around to the

with their usual Sunday interest.

The congregation numbered fifty or



"Pears to me this lookin'-glass is crooked."—See page 71.

sixty of all ages, men, women and children and intermediates. The intermediates were shy, but awkwardly interested in one another, as could be seen by timid glances and blushing faces. That Crab Apple Center was to be the scene of honorable

and honest love-making in the future, as it had been in the past, was evident at a glance. Yes, the "intermediates" looked wistfully and bashfully at one another, as if each could tell the other some way out of the difficulty which each and all felt themselves to be in, owing to "hard times" and the disposition of people generally.

It was chilly, and the congregation clustered around the air-tight stove for a few moments of warmth. The minister came in and shook hands all around, as was his weekly custom. Now, this minister was a peculiar man. He was a man of refinement and personal charm. He would have graced any pulpit in any city but that he had been "sent" to Crab Apple Center. How it happened there is no need of telling; that God had sent him being sufficient excuse for his being there. And he had been there but six months. During that time he had received six bushels of potatoes, and twenty bushels of corn, and two tons of hay, and apples and other fruit, besides vegetables and some poultry and an early spring pig—a "runt," which had been sent to him by Josiah Small, the said runt being too much "bother" at the Small farm. All these things were very welcome to Rev. John Silent, late of Silver City, who, with his young wife and baby, occupied a tiny old cottage close to the meeting-house. In justice to the congregation it ought to be stated that besides the various perquisites mentioned, the minister had received thirty-five dollars in money, which was a beneficent allowance considering the fact that money in Crab Apple Center was "as scarce as hen's teeth."

When the minister had shaken hands all around he walked to the little raised platform and took his seat behind a home-made table upon which rested the Bible and hymn-book.

This taking of his place by the minister was the signal for talking and visiting to cease, and the congregation to take their seats. Josiah Small took it upon himself to put a large stick of wood into the stove, banging the door to with emphasis, as if saying to the inanimate concern, "Make the most of that, for it's the last stick of wood for the meeting."

After the prayer and the singing of "Old Hundred" by the whole congregation, the minister read for his text that promise of God given to men of all nations and conditions: "While the earth remaineth, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, shall not cease." It was a promise to farmers especially, he said. "If God has a chosen people anywhere in the world at the present day, it is the farmers."

This statement made some of the congregation look around them in an astonished way, and as if questioning their right to be called a "chosen people." How could they know that had John Silent been addressing an audience in Deep Gutter or on Mansion Avenue, he would have said the same thing concerning them? He repeated himself, "If God has a chosen people on the earth to-day, it is the farmers. He has loved them always, choosing from among the tillers of the soil prophets, and priests, and disciples for Jesus. He has given to them more beautiful things to look at and think about than belong to any other class. 'While

the earth remaineth, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, shall not cease.' In giving summer and winter, seed time and harvest, he knew that these held everything to make families comfortable and happy. He did not promise to lift mortgages, nor to give gold and silver and costly clothes, nor perfect roads, nor canned luxuries from long distances, nor mansions to live in, nor perfect weather all the time, nor city life with its fretfulness. He knew that there would be storms of necessity, and sometimes droughts; but these, to the people who could find and learn it, were to be a lesson in perfecting character. If farmers of themselves assume mortgages on one hundred and sixty acres, when twenty acres better tilled would have been more fruitful, the farmer cannot lay the blame to the Giver of summer and winter and seed time and harvest. One of God's wise men wrote a proverb on purpose for farmers: 'Better is a dry morsel and quietness therewith, than an house full of sacrifices with strife.' Better a dry morsel of land, on which you can dig a well or turn a ditch, than a house full of sacrifices in the line of mortgages and debts. A morsel of land on which is a little house and a thankful heart, or a family of happy hearts, is God's ideal of human happiness. Look it over, friends. Some cattle, a good many fowls, a few fruits, a cellar full of vegetables, a bin full of corn, a field of stubble and a loaf of bread in the oven — all these for luxuries; and yet unquietness, a house full of sacrifice of sweet temper and thankful hearts, complaint against the markets, a hoarding up of grudge and hard feeling and envy for those who

live in cities and towns with half your resources. How many Sabbath-day dinners are in your homes to-day, dinners fit for kings, and yet you complain because perchance there are not powdered sugar and canned mushrooms and quail on toast and sirloin steak and fine flour and a thousand things not necessary to a quiet mind.

"You are covetous of gold and finery and a supply of show, and your hearts grow as hard as the frozen ground in winter time, and you turn into misers, hoarding your envy and bitterness of feeling against the rich and those you think prosperous, in a more miserly way than a rich man can hoard his gold and silver. The love of God cannot cheer you nor his everlasting arms support you, while you are not desirous of cheer, and while you are seeking to support your poor lives on the husks of covetousness, and greed for such things as are not convenient. What does it mean that the markets are poor, and that there are more vegetables and fruits in your cellars than you can eat or save? If there was love in your hearts commensurate with the unsold crops in Crab Apple Center, do you think there would be families in Silver City, twenty-five miles from your home, who do not taste of fruits and vegetables once in many weeks, and to whom a roasted pig or a boiled fowl or a pan of eggs or a pat of butter and a mug of milk would be luxuries to remember for a lifetime, flavoring future want, and making the desert of their poor lives blossom as the rose?

"Yes, farmers are God's chosen people, and he speaks to them in rosy apples and mealy potatoes and compact cabbage

heads and shimmering onions and golden turnips and yellow corn, as truly as he ever spoke to Moses out of a cloud or a burning bush, or to the prophet in a still small voice. Listen when you go down cellar and murmur, at sight of the good things, that potatoes are not worth enough to pay for carrying them to market, and butter is only ten cents a pound — listen and hear God say, ‘My children, I have other children who are hungry. Think of them. Think of them more and think of those who keep the markets down less, and hoard up love in place of envy, and be misers after my own heart; for have I not told you to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven?’ You, farmers; treasures of kind thought, and the love that hunts for what it shall consume itself upon, and the charity that thinketh no evil, and the content that ceases to grumble.

“It is true that there are combinations and monopolies and things that are not as you would have them. But there is also love in the world waiting for your love to invite it to come out and show itself. If you love even as Jesus loved, you may be his co-workers in redeeming the world. What you need is a new character. The old character for grumbling and discontent and unthankfulness and a blaming of somebody else for your miseries, must give place to something better; and God speed the day when farmers shall declare to the world through happy faces and cheerful words and unenvious hearts that they are indeed God’s chosen people. Have you not his assurance that ‘while the earth remaineth, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, shall not cease’?”

There was a scratching of heads and an uneasiness of position and a looking surreptitiously about to see how others were taking it. It was a sermon on a new line in Crab Apple Center, and it set the congregation to thinking. Not that they had not been thinking all their lives, but it was a new line of thought.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME CROOKED THINGS IN CRAB APPLE CENTER.

WHEN Josiah Small stood before the looking-glass that Sunday morning and said to his wife “There’s something crooked,” he was right. Several things in that neighborhood were crooked. Among the most crooked being Josiah Small himself. He had always lived in Crab Apple Center, this being the post-office address for all the farmers in that locality. His father had lived there before him, and Sarah, his wife, had always lived there. The Small farm was a large one, well run-down with neglect and a trying, on Josiah’s part, to do the work of four hands. Of course there could not be much profit by this management, even in years when markets were good. Now that the markets were distinctively dull, without an appreciable cause, Josiah Small was dull, too. Not that he had not always been dull. He was never anything else. If it was not one thing, it was another for him to grumble about. When markets were passably fair the “roads were bad” or he had the “rheumatiz” and couldn’t “haul.” When markets were dull he grumbled that there

was "so much truck" to stow away and "let rot." He never saw much to be thankful for, nor much to make him glad he lived, anyhow.

What Josiah Small was, might be said to be the case with the most of his neighbors. Hard-working, hard-thinking, hard-taking folk they were, with now and then an exception. One of these rare exceptions was Samuel Varney, son of Jeremiah Varney, an old resident of Appleville before it was Silver City.

Samuel Varney was a born farmer as well as a born Christian, having inherited both "leanings" from his father. He had come to Crab Apple Center when his native heath had been struck by a boom and spoiled forever for a farming community. It was his sole aim in life to "farm for the Lord," as he expressed it, and one had but to observe his methods to be satisfied that he was right.

Sabbath evening after the sermon, Samuel Varney and his wife drove over to pay a visit to the Smalls, this being a customary thing for neighbors to do on Sundays. Josiah Small came out and helped "unhitch," and Sarah Small came and met Louise Varney and said, "How de do?" and laid off her bonnet, and put some more wood in the stove, and gave her visitor the rocking-chair from the best room. Josiah and Samuel came in without wiping their feet, as was

the custom of farmers. They laid their respective hats on the wood-box, and then tilted themselves in chairs against the wall.

The two "men folks" discussed early shoats, and spring lambs, and corn fodder,



Samuel Varney and his wife drove over.

and sprouting potatoes in the cellar, and early onion sets, and the backward spring, and the year's prospects generally. The "women folks" discussed early "set-tings" and the laying qualities of Leg-horns, and family soap, and the easiest way to whiten the washing, and the renovating of old clothes. Florence Small

came out of her room and took a seat near the window where she always sat when in the kitchen, this window giving her a view of hills and trees, cattle browsing for the first grass-blades in the fields and scratching their necks on the gaunt trees.

Flora was a lover of the life in its perspective. The horizon she loved. The near landscape, the part that touched her and which she touched, was very distasteful to her. She was conscious that it was "all wrong" somehow; the thought that she might in any sense help to make it right had never come to her until very lately. But in the last few months she had done some hard thinking, the thinking being caused by certain sermons which had been preached in the Crab Apple Center meeting-house. Flora did not tilt her chair, as she very much wished to do from old habit. Of late there had been given to her a certain intuition as to the relation of sundry practices to good manners. She looked across at her father, the rounds of his tilted chair giving way at their juncture with the main legs of it, just as every chair in the house was giving way to its unnatural usage. Flora wished he wouldn't tilt; but Josiah, if he had been approached upon the subject, would have replied, "What was chairs made for if 'twasn't for tiltin'?" Oh, well, it was of no consequence; and Samuel Varney was tilting, too, falling in line with his host.

Josiah Small said he wished they "had some good apples from down cellar." This was a hint to his wife, who immediately arose and reached up behind the stove for a match. The cellar was dark,

of course, and she would have to light the small hand-lamp on the shelf, used mostly for going down cellar with. She dropped the match in the wood-box. Then commenced a search compared to which expeditions to the north pole and the Zambesi fade and pale.

With an audible sigh at recollection of past occasions when she had searched for something in that same wood-box, Sarah Small lifted out the first layer of wood and laid it on the back of the stove. Then began such a system of "fishing" as was never known outside of country wood-boxes in spring that have not been despoiled of their contents for the entire winter. Down she went, patiently, between layer after layer of chips, and wood, and twine, and chicken wings, and meat bones, and dustpan-dirt, and table-cloth shakings, and whittlings, and hair-combings, and shaving-paper, and nobody can tell what else; sighing as she went, till at last she came to the match resolutely keeping on its way to the far bottom. Sarah remarked that she'd been going to clean that wood-box out all winter, but somehow it had escaped her mind. Then she lighted the lamp from a fresh match, the particular match which had caused her so much trouble having proved good for nothing at last. She went to the shelf and took the steamer from its nail and started for the apple-bin. Florence said, "I'll go, mother," and Mrs. Small sat down again.

"Florence is a good daughter," she observed to her guest. "She is a great comfort to Josiah and me. But somehow she's outgrowing the farm. She ain't satisfied with what we've had before her, but

wants 'culture' and 'refinement,' as she calls something that don't grow on farms in this section. It ain't that she wants money; it ain't that. She says she don't know what she does want. She wants a vocation, or mission, or something of that vague sort of thing. I'm afraid she'll turn missionary or typewriter or school-teacher or something."

The fact is, Florence was experiencing a change of some sort. She was becoming dissatisfied with the old order of things, and yearning for something better. Not that Florence Small was not a Christian. She was always that, in a way. What she was longing for was a practical use of her faith. That Christian people, young and old, do experience a change of heart, as it were, from time to time, is true. Perhaps it were better to say a change of purpose, or a change of character. Habits of action cling and grow like ivy or mistletoe; so does one's habitude of thought and possibility of expression.

This lack of making a practical use of her faith was rendering Florence almost miserable. It was true, what her mother was saying; she did want a vocation or mission or something. She had lived all her life in an atmosphere of discontent and grumbling, and she longed for satisfaction with something or somebody. Down cellar at the apple-bin she set the light on a beam and laid her face in her hands. "Oh, heavenly Father, if things could only be different!"

Then she felt better, as she always did when she had said something, if only a word, into the ear of the One who was very near her. She watched a spider spin

his web across the corner of the bin and back again patiently. She wondered what incentive a spider had, beyond getting her daily supply of food. She picked out the rosy apples, smiling at their beauty, till her tin steamer was full and then she went upstairs.

"Gone a long time, seems to me," her father said, always grumbling at something.

"I stopped to watch a spider. I like spiders," she said, passing the apples.

"I believe Flora would find some comfort if she was shut up in prison, if only she had a spider to watch," her mother remarked. "Give Flora a spider or a bug of any sort, and she's happy."

"Pretty good sermon that, this morning," Samuel Varney observed, munching with a sort of swish and smack the crisp apple in his hand, peeling and all. "Pretty good sermon I call that."

This he said in a careless way, as if he had just happened to think of it, though all the time he had come on purpose to discuss this very subject.

"I think 'twas pretty hard on us farmers," replied Josiah Small. "Such plain preaching don't set well with me. Kind of found fault, didn't he?"

"Fell in line with the rest of us, didn't he?"

"Well, we don't have to answer to the parson, and a young feller like him. I'd rather he'd preach about the ark and the flood and the ten plagues, than to up and tell us to our faces that we was complainin' and covetous and miserly. I don't think he's called upon to tell us that. He won't get any more potatoes out of me, nor cow-feed. I was intendin'

to take him some timothy this week, but I sha'n't now."

"Now I rather enjoyed the sermon, Josiah," Samuel said, feeling his way very cautiously. "I myself am conscious I ain't what I ought to be in the way of bein' contented with such things as I have been blessed with. I set too much store by the markets, and, just as the preacher said, I do get envious of people in the city, and I don't see the good things spread out before me, in a thankful way. I despise myself, neighbor Small. I mean to turn over a new leaf, I most certainly do. What do you say to havin' a farmers' meetin' at one of our houses about this subject of grumblin', and see 'f we can't help each other out somehow. We are sort o' lost in the woods, I guess, and we might take hold of hands, as it were, and follow some straight landmark like a tree or a star, and maybe find our way before morning."

Josiah Small threw his apple-core into the wood-box, exactly as he had thrown all his apple-cores during the winter. It rustled and bumped as it found its way to safe moorings, and then there was silence.

Flora's eyes were shining. She took in the meaning of Samuel Varney's proposition. But she was cautious and waited for her father.

"I don't think I care to join a meetin' of that sort," he said, taking another apple and passing them on. "I don't have much time to attend meetin's. Did you think of havin' the women folks?"

"Oh, yes, have the women folks, of course! A meetin's only half a meetin' without them. Come, now, come over to our house and let's discuss the matter of

grumblin'. If we ain't guilty, no need of pleadin' to it; and, if we are, we might help one another, as I said, seein' we're all in the pickle together."

Josiah Small did not like to be left out of anything in the neighborhood, especially an affair of so much importance as a meeting, so he consented reluctantly, remarking that he "s'posed mother and Flora would like to go, and he would have to go to keep 'em company."

Flora, in her corner, looking at the fields and trees, was feeling glad. She had done her share of grumbling, she was aware of that, and conviction as to this truth had been taking strong hold of her. "A contented mind is a continual feast" had not been a text applicable to many people at Crab Apple Center. "That was written to, and of, city folks," — so thought the Center people, if they thought about it at all, when they happened to read that part of the Book which contained it. Alas! they did not know — how could they? — that city folks had more trials than they on their farms ever dreamed of having. How could they know that "Bear ye one another's burdens" meant reciprocity of intention and action between city folk and country people in a sort of mutual life benefit?

Louise Varney rose and said she guessed she had better be getting her bonnet, and the two women went into the bedroom adjoining the kitchen while the visitor should "put on her things."

"I wish you would take Flora and come over and make me a visit," she said. "It's of no use for us to be always in the wash-tub and the soap-kettle and the potato-bin. By the way, Sarah, they say there

has been considerable suffering among the poor in the city this winter. Work's been slim and pay low, and the winter a hard one. I tell you what, I'm thankful for potatoes every time I go down cellar, not to mention turnips and onions and cabbages and corn and eggs and milk. We live on the fat of the land, we farmers' families; I realize that, and I'm afraid we ain't thankful enough."

"I realize one thing," Sarah rejoined, "and that's this: we need money awfully for sugar and calico and some alpaca, and shoes with tips on the toes and buttoned on the side, and Flora wants a gilt belt and a new hat and some gloves. I tell you, Louise, we need money dreadfully."

With an intuition that she should not retort, being a guest in the house, Louise Varney did not reply, though she longed to say something about "having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," and "be content with such things as ye have," supposing, of course, that the "things" mentioned were sufficient for need, without reference to fashion or superfluity. Florence pressed her hand as she went out to join the men, who were leaning over the barn-yard fence discussing the "critters."

"I tell you, Josiah, milk's a great savin'," Samuel Varney was saying. "They say it's the greatest luxury in the city; babies die for want of it and sick folks long for it so, and everybody cries 'Milk, milk!' to themselves low, if they don't say it out loud. And here we farmers are with milk till we can't drink any more, and it is turned into the pigs' trough and the hens' pans."

This view of the milk matter had

never occurred to Josiah Small before, he never having been without milk since the day he was born; and, it must be confessed, it set him to thinking. But he thought he saw his way out of too much self-censure.

"They say most of folks don't care for milk; it don't agree with 'em and makes 'em bilious. I always s'posed city folks didn't want milk, and I guess they don't."

"And then, there's the matter of eggs," Samuel went on. "They say city folks never see a fresh egg. Some of the city folks, I mean — the poor, and them as see hard times. And here we are with eggs for breakfast the year round. I tell you, Josiah, we have a good deal to be thankful for. Milk and eggs. We can do better without markets than we can do without milk and eggs. It's a wonder to me the Lord hasn't stricken us farmers one and all with blindness or chilblains or frogs or something, before this. I'm ashamed of myself, for one. Come, Louise, it's time we was goin' home and doin' the milkin'. Be sure to come to the grumblers' meetin' now. Sunday evenin' would be a good time, I guess; no services, and 'twon't interfere with the work."

Josiah put on his overalls and went about the milking. Somehow the white streams that tinkled against the side of the tin pail had a new meaning, and he was conscious of a certain force being started in his soul, this being common alike to city gentlemen of means like Alfred Slocomb, Esq., and country farmers without much means, like Josiah Small.



CHAPTER XVIII.

AT THE GRUMBLERS' MEETING.

"I'M afraid there won't be many here, Samuel," observed Louise Varney to her husband, the night of the appointed Grumblers' Meeting. "You'd better have not called it a Grumblers' Meeting; the name of it might scare the worst of the grumblers."

"Let it scare 'em, Louise. But it won't. They'll come, if just to argue that they've got something to grumble for. I didn't ask the minister. Now that he's set the stone to rolling, it's better he should stay away. Us farmers can fight it out ourselves."

Louise Varney arranged the chairs around the kitchen for the third time. She was afraid there wouldn't be enough of them, so she brought in the wash-bench and spread a comforter over it, and she turned the wood-box over and placed a board across two chairs, and then she said she guessed there'd "be room."

"Samuel," she said, "I believe I'll make a great pot of coffee. If the stomach's warm, it lies pretty near to the heart, and very likely the heart'll be warm, too."

"I'm willin'," Samuel replied; and the smell of boiling coffee was the first thing that met the farmers as they drove up to the "Varney Place" with their families.

"I didn't know Louise was goin' to get supper," observed Sarah Small to Florence.

As the meeting convened it would have been noticeable to an observer that the men happened to take the chairs, leaving the wood-box and the board and the wash-bench for the "women folks."

This was done so quietly and without evident intention that one might have supposed it accidental, if one didn't know.

The farmers of Crab Apple Center did not mean to be selfish nor usurping in any sense. It came to them by instinct, as it were, to take the chairs; for, if they should occupy the benches, how in the world would they be able to "tilt"? So they tilted, the women and girls sitting bolt upright with great good-humor. The board across the two chairs swayed, and so they had to leave a vacant place in the middle of it, like a dash in a broken sentence.

"Whose goin' to lead?" asked Timothy Meader of Ira Coombs, in a tone loud enough to be heard by all.

"Samuel Varney, he's goin' to lead," replied Josiah Small. "He's got the meetin' up and it's to his house, and he ought'er lead."

"Well, I'll lead, if that's the word," Samuel said, opening a great leather-covered Bible, "though it ain't my meetin' specially. I will read a portion of the Seventy-third Psalm, bein' I've opened right to it, and didn't know where 'twas goin' to open to;" and he read: "'Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart. But as for me, my feet were almost gone, my steps had well-nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me. Thus my heart was grieved, and

I was pricked in my reins. So foolish was I, and ignorant. I was as a beast before thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.' ”

It was a natural thing for these people to open their meeting with a chapter in the Bible. They, like farmers as a class everywhere, were in the habit of reading the Bible, as they were in the habit of eating breakfast and doing the milking. It was a part of the natural order of things, they being for the most part born in “the faith.” They had faith, as their kind mostly do have it, and needed but one thing more, which was as essential as the first — to put their faith into active practice.

“That’s a good chapter; hits the nail on the head, to my way of thinkin’,” the leader said. “Truly God is good to Israel. If we are his chosen people, as the minister said we are, then we are his Israel. As for the clean heart, I ain’t so sure about that. A heart may be clean, comparatively speaking, I suppose, there being no murder or thieving in it, and yet it may lack being put in order somehow. I guess it’s about true that our feet had well-nigh slipped. We’ve been slippin’, we farmers, for some time. One of us starts, and then we grab on to some other one and make him slip, too, till we’ve pretty well-nigh all got to slippin’, figuratively speakin’. And we’ve all been more or less envious at the foolish, and thinkin’ hard of ’em, and grumblin’ at the prosperity of other folks no wickedder than ourselves. And we have been thinkin’, to ourselves most of us, and some of us doin’ our thinkin’ out loud, that we

farmers are awfully plagued and chastened every mornin’. And when we thought to know all about it, judgin’ others by ourselves, and hatin’ our city neighbors, it was too painful for us. We was so foolish and so ignorant, accordin’ to the passage read; but there’s a last verse that’s very comfortin’, when the Psalmist says, after considerin’ all his foolishness and plaguin’s and slippin’s and envyin’s and grumblin’s, ‘But God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever.’ He’d better have found that out to start with, and then he’d have been saved a good deal of trouble. It seems to me that this passage of Scripture that’s been read hits the farmers’ case to a nice point.”

“I didn’t know this was goin’ to be a religious meetin’,” observed Timothy Meader. “I thought ’twas goin’ to be a Grumblers’ Meetin’.”

“No, it ain’t particularly a religious meetin’,” Samuel Varney said, “but it’s the Sabbath day and becomin’ of us to read a chapter in the Bible. Besides, we’ve got to have a leadin’ topic, and there ain’t nothin’ better than the Bible for leadin’ topics, is there, Josiah Small?”

Josiah Small assented, and then observed further: “I don’t see the sin of grumblin’, when there’s a cause for grumblin’. If farmers haven’t a cause, then I’d like to know who has. Look at the potatoes bein’ fed to the cows and sheep, and the corn, too, and the hay wastin’, and the apples lookin’ longingly for a market and findin’ none, and our pantaloons a wearin’ out, and the women folks’ dresses lookin’ shabby, and we wishin’ we had granulated sugar and chocolate candy, the new cereals, and im-

ported sardines and things. I say we have cause to grumble. And look at the backward spring. The crops ought to be planted by this time; they was last year."

"There's a verse somewhere in the Bible — I don't know but it's in the chapter you read, Samuel — that's somethin' like this: 'Their eyes stand out with fatness; they have more than heart could wish,' " remarked Ira Coombs. "I'm somethin' of your way of thinkin'. If we farmers don't have eyes that stand out with fatness the year round, I don't know who has. Think of our cellars and barns. When we are hungry, we've only to turn to and help ourselves to the best there is, and a variety of it. I guess the poor people that's cannin' sardines would be glad to change their diet for potatoes and apples. And think of the poor in cities that never have a crop of anythin' but irregular wages, and mighty poor then, and whose cellars and bins never hold more than enough of anything to last one day. Do you s'pose they'd grumble if they could roast a fat hen every Sunday, and have fried eggs for breakfast, or even hull nice rich corn and eat it with milk with the cream all stirred in? Victuals are worth more'n clothes. As to clothes, our forefathers never waited to sell their crops to buy dresses and trousers with; they turned to and sowed some flax and sheared a sheep and made their clothes. What's to hinder us from doin' it, if we ain't too lazy? Besides, what do we want with finery anyhow? Our minds can be fine, if our bodies are in jeans and calico."

And then Samuel Varney said: "There is a good deal about murmurin' in the Bible. It must be an awful sin in

the sight of the Lord to keep grumblin' as we farmers are doin'. We've made a bad character for ourselves the world over, and I'm ashamed, for one. People in the old times were punished for grumblin' and murmurin'. We are commanded by the Apostle not to murmur as some people murmured. And it beats all, how the habit of grumblin' grows on a person, and on a community. It ain't good manners to God to grumble so much. I think we ought to practice good manners to him more'n we do. He'd appreciate it, no doubt."

The idea of practising good manners toward God was a new one to the good-hearted, plain-spoken people assembled in Samuel Varney's kitchen, and they sat still two minutes thinking about it. Louise thought it a good time to pass the coffee, and she did so, some of the women waiting till the men were done, there not being enough cups to go around.

"Where'd you get that coffee?" asked Josiah Small. "I never drunk better. It must be costly. We haven't had a cup of real good coffee like that in the house for a year. Can't turn corn and potatoes into money or coffee, so we have to go without."

"Excellent coffee!" echoed Ira Coombs. "Where'd you buy it?"

"That coffee's an invention of my wife's," replied the host. "We couldn't afford any store coffee this year, with such hard times and so many sufferin', and she just made it herself out of common corn and wheat and rye and peas and sunflower seed and lettuce seed and hickory nuts and pumpkin seeds. The fact is, I don't know what all she didn't

put into it. And I call it tip-top. She roasted the things brown, you see, slow-like, and then ground 'em all up, hit or miss, and it was mostly hit. It didn't shiftless brains and hearts, till there was a perfect measure of good feeling in the big kitchen, and the farmers forgot for once who was likely to be the coming man



"Where'd you get that coffee?" asked Josiah Small.—See page 84.

cost anything hardly—just the things that are goin' to waste, you know, and wouldn't sell. It's a mistake tryin' to make sham coffee out of bare grain, without nuts or oily seeds. It's these that give the richness to it. Have another cup, all of you."

More coffee went around, and more thoughts went to spinning in dull heads, and the new force set itself to work in

in the next election, and who was to blame for the hard times, and who controlled the markets. In fact they felt like an independent nation and began to wonder why they hadn't held Grumblers' Meetings before.

When Samuel Varney called the meeting to order again, there were no questions asked as to whether it was a religious meeting or not.

"And what are we goin' to do about it?" he asked. "We are professin' Christians. Our characters have been at stake, as it were, all smirched and frayed out, and, instead of being God's chosen people, we've been the children of the wicked one, accordin' to the Bible, frettin' and complainin' and worryin' with our cross-natures. We've got to make amends somehow."

"That's so," came from several of the men tilted against the wall. "But how are we to do it?"

"The Lord can help us out on that line, friends," the leader said. "He is especially handy at helpin' people make amends. Suppose we let it brew a week or so, and come together again in the same capacity. In the meantime, friends," he continued, "we can all set our wits to work to help each other break these habits of grumblin'. 'Look on the bright side,' is my motto from this on. If we don't correct some of our mistakes, our children will be born grumblers, and it will be as hard to cure 'em as to change the color of their hair. It's the children I'm thinkin' about mostly. Open your eyes and ears for a week, and see how the young ones are followin' our example. It is astonishin', when one comes to think of it."

When the women went into the bedroom to put on their wraps, Sarah Small said to Louise Varney that she guessed she'd "been to blame for Josiah's murmurin' so much. Men are a great deal what women make 'em, you know, and if we are contented and happy it goes a long ways toward makin' them so. Come to think of it, I do think we have amazin'

good times, with the poultry and the calves and the gardens. It's enough sight easier than takin' in washin', as city women have to do, or goin' out house-cleanin'. Here we work just for our own selves, without no master or mistress outside the family."

And Louise Varney said she thought it was "high time to wake up to our blessings. Anybody that could have a supply of such coffee as that was, without any cost, ought to be thankful." And she said she hadn't a doubt there were hundreds of other luxuries they could invent if only they put on their thinking-caps.

CHAPTER XIX.

AN IMPROMPTU ANTI-GRUMBLERS' MEETING.

IT WAS a cold spring rain-storm in Crab Apple Center neighborhood. The storm blew fitfully, and sideways came the drops almost in streams, but this out-of-door inclemency did not interfere with indoor peace and plenty. Nor did it deter certain young people from convening at the house of Josiah Small, by invitation of Florence, and on account of an event which was necessarily annual in its nature. Birthdays are not in the habit of waiting for pleasant weather, and country young folks are neither salt nor sugar when it comes to standing a little wet.

So they came running, under umbrellas and without umbrellas, through mud and puddles and such hinderances as people who live alongside city sidewalks never dream of. There was a party of eight under an awning made of an old quilt

tacked to a set of quilting frames and carried by five boys, one at each corner and one in the middle, the one in the middle bearing a support which tilted the quilt towards the corners and so let the water drain off. This impromptu roof of the movable variety was the source of great fun, and the occupants of it would gladly have traveled twice as far without inconvenience. It was deposited in the wood-shed to drain, along with rubbers and old shoes and overcoats and wraps.

Inside, in Josiah Small's great kitchen, it was warm and merry and noisy with real country fun. Boys and girls brought up to work together in the potato-dropping, and the hay-gathering, and the apple-shakings, and the huskings, and the threshings, know little of fictitious shyness and assumed coyness, and that worst of all youthful practices, affectation. They are whole-souled, like their elders, and familiar without being bold, and brotherly and sisterly en masse.

They were to stay to supper, and all helped in the getting of it, the boys peeling the potatoes and slicing the salt pork and larding the biscuit pans. They were every one adepts in these arts, being mother-brought-up and accustomed to help in the house, as the girls were accustomed to help out of doors.

It was not a great "spread," as a fashionable girl would have coveted. But Florence Small was not a fashionable girl. She was kind, and ingenious with what she had in resources, and, for several weeks past, uncomplaining. She felt that bread and butter and pork and potatoes and gingerbread and apple pie and

hospitality, and cold water and milk to drink with it all, was fare fit for anybody, and so thought her guests.

After supper came pop-corn balls, the boys popping the corn, and the girls making the balls and tossing them about the room to be caught by the quickest-fingered. After the corn was popped there was a bed of glowing coals, and so the front doors of the big cook stove were left open and the kerosene lamp was unlighted, and the young folks sat around, some of them in pairs, but all in close company. Gradually the noise and laughter and fun-making ceased, and a quiet hush came over the party, quite as entertaining and profitable in its way as the previous condition.

The conversation took an unexpected, or rather, an unpremeditated, turn, in the direction of social affairs pertaining to Crab Apple Center. This was natural and almost essential, since most of these young people had attended, without voice of course, the Grumblers' Meeting at Samuel Varney's. The topic of that meeting had set the young folks to thinking as they never had thought before, and, from thinking, they had come to talking in the interval since. So that now, of necessity, as I said, they continued to think and talk.

"It has troubled me a good deal lately, for several months now," Florence Small said, following something someone had dropped about country folks, "the character we have made for ourselves the world over, especially in the United States. We young folks of the farm are known as grumblers. We belong to the Grumbler family, of course, but we ought

to start out on a new line and make a character for ourselves."

"Samuel Varney's got a secret," observed Owen Coombs. "He says he hopes there won't be any better markets this year than there was last, so we farmers'll know how to make markets. He says he hopes there'll be big crops this fall, so God will have a chance to teach us a lesson. I don't what he's thinking about, but you all know when Samuel Varney gets an idea into his head it's very likely to work out to his own satisfaction and our astonishment."

"I heard him talking with Timothy Meader," said Bob Bently, "and he said he believed the Almighty has an object in view when he lets us farmers hold our crops over so, knowing just as well that he could make markets grow, like squashes or cabbages, if he wanted to. He says we are 'obtuse' or something, and don't work alongside of God in his plans the way we ought to. Now I can't see, any more'n father can, what object the Almighty has in allowing the markets for farm produce all to go to rack and ruin. The world is God's farm, it looks to me, and it seems as if he would want to work it to his own advantage, or ours, don't it?"

"Whatever Samuel Varney's secret is, we shall be likely to find it out," said the hostess. "I read in the papers that markets will be no better this fall than last, and that the prospects are for big crops of everything all over the country. It must be that the markets belong to men and the farms belong to God."

"I did think," said Owen Coombs, "that I would quit farming and go to the city next year, but I've changed my mind

since the minister come here. He's lived in the city and he knows everything about it, and him and me have had lots of talks about it. Besides," and Owen's voice was very low in the glimmering light of the coals, and nobody could see his face, "besides, I feel queer about my past life." Owen spoke about his past life as if he might be sixty years old instead of twenty.

There was a little hush in the small audience, and then Florence said:

"I have felt queer about my past life, too. It seems to me so hollow of good efforts and thoughts. I've lived long enough to know more than I do about the things nearest to me, flowers and vegetables and hay and apples and, and — well, I've lived long enough to know more than I do about serving God and helping him on his great farm."

Then there was another hush, and Josiah Small and his wife Sarah slipped quietly out of the room. Those young folks talking about having lived long enough to have helped God on his great farm; and they, these two, Josiah and Sarah, nearly sixty now, and never a helping-hand had they loaned the great Master and Owner of the claim they'd been living on all these years! The thought was very stirring, and it was long before the two could sleep.

In the kitchen the conversation went on, having made for itself a channel to run in. These young folks of the farming district knew nothing of false pride in keeping to themselves what was best in their thoughts. It had never been taught them that reticence about resolves and hopes and other things that help faith

along, was the proper thing in their intercourse with each other, therefore they talked on until each had confessed to some ambition better than making money, or even wearing good clothes and having more show in life. It all came about by the sermons of young John Silent, who had told them that what Jesus had said about life being more than meat and body than raiment, was nothing more nor less than an upholding of Christian character, the making most prominent personality, in spite of sometimes hunger and worn-out clothes.

"I've been thinking," Lizzie Meader observed, "that we country girls are like Lot's wife more than anybody else. We are always looking with longing eyes towards the city, just because people who live there wear better clothes and put on more show than we do. If we are not careful, there will be a long line of country girls, mostly from Crab Apple Center, who have turned into pillars of salt, or something about as active and necessary to society, all on account of our looking towards the city so much. Our fathers talk city to us till we don't know what else to think about. It's the markets and the city prices and the city monopolies and the city misers and city everything from morning till night, until a person would think the city was life everlasting or of as much consequence. We children have got to start out on a new line and lead the older ones with us, or the country will be left to the dogs. It isn't much better than that now."

"I move to inaugurate a new society, to be known as the Anti-Grumbler Society," said Owen Coombs. "We've got to make

a stir of some kind, or get swamped in these efforts of ours to make things different. We must take our first thoughts off from the backward spring and the mean markets and such things, and set them higher, if we look for a change in our present surroundings."

"Yes, set them where God is," said the hostess. "I feel the need of God. If farmers are God's chosen people, as the minister said, then farmers' children are his children, and he must love us more than we've been aware of. I feel as though better days were coming for Crab Apple Center, and I for one don't want to go anywhere else to live. Those sermons on city life that the minister gave us, set more than one of us to thinking."

"And what we want more than anything else is to honor God," Owen said. "That sermon on character he gave us two weeks ago, was enough to set me thinking. Don't you remember how he said, 'God has set every person in the world to work making a man or a woman, each to fashion or shape an individual, himself or herself'? Some of us spend all our time looking at our neighbor's piece of work, and we criticise it, and walk around it, and bring our friends to hear what they have to say about it; and we sometimes handle it with smutty hands and disfigure it unwittingly, and break off a fragment that never can be put in place again. All the time neglecting our own work, or, if we get to it sometimes, we use poor material and think of something else while we are putting in the most prominent features, and often we spoil it altogether; and when we come to take the work to the Master, he wouldn't

know it as made after the Pattern he loaned us to make it by."

"Yes, I remember that sermon," Florence said, "and it made me ashamed to think of the woman I was making of myself. We needn't blame our parents or the markets or the cities or anything, when it comes to our personality. If God allows these things to exist, it is that we may have something rough to whet our tools on. That's another thing the minister said. And this: 'If farmers' children knew all the secrets in bush, and barn loft, and brook, and wood-pile, and cellar bin, and garden bed, and attic corner, they would never lack for company or entertainment. God has caused more beautiful things to grow for farmers' children than for anyone else in the world, because they happen to live where these things grow, I suppose. Farmers' children are very dear to God,' the minister says. Now, for one, I'm going to take to botany and bugs and birds and fish and ferns, and see if I cannot make myself over just a little in these parts that have been misshapen and ugly. I could write a book about toadstools now, I believe, if I only had sense enough to write so it would take. I took to toadstools last summer after that lady from the city was here boarding. If city ladies would leave behind them a little keepsake like toadstools or glow-worms or tree-bark or leaf-skeletons, it would be some comfort to board them. But when they just come to pass away the time and never leave us a single new thought about anything, it's different. I want them to just drop a bit of fresh character in the fields or lanes or best bedrooms or somewhere, so that we

can have it to remember them by instead of the money they pay for their fresh milk and eggs. I like the money well enough, but I'd like the keepsakes mentioned better. Why, I never see a toadstool now but I think of that lady!"

"Maybe we'd better drop a little keepsake for them to take away with them," observed Lizzie Meader. "Perhaps we act as if we didn't care for anything but the board-money, and they think we haven't any bit of character to spare them, there not being enough to go round hardly in our own family. There are two sides to this summer-boarder business."

"Well, we are getting off the track," Owen Coombs said, while he shut up the stove and put more wood in, and Florence lit the kerosene lamp. "I'm in favor of turning over a new leaf, us farmers' children, and seeing if we can't redeem our characters. We are looked upon as awkward, and slow-go's, and ignorant, and unhandsome of attainments generally; and grumbling, and envious, and sour. We can show the world, if we've a mind to, that we are the true aristocracy, living nearer Nature's heart than anybody else, and so, cultured and happy and worth getting acquainted with. Let's ask the minister to give us lessons in botany and insects and birds and toadstools. They say he's a naturalist. I know he'd like to do it. Hurrah for some fun this summer and fall!"

The clouds had forgotten to put enough rain into their pockets to last the evening through, and the young folks went home in the starlight, carrying their umbrellas under their arms, and their

new thoughts in their heads, and their new resolves and hopes in their merry hearts.

CHAPTER XX.

THANKSGIVING IN DEEP GUTTER NEIGHBORHOOD.

THE hot summer had passed in Deep Gutter neighborhood, bringing to notice the usual number of sick babies, and tired and worn older folk. There had been several funerals in the chapel, but, through all the trials and sorrows, the peace of God had grown in hearts that were dear to him, and the friends of the poor had not forgotten them, and the autumn had brought cool weather and better health, with meager promise of winter luxuries. Alfred Slocumb, Esq., and his friend, Colonel Wheeler, attended to the "work" question, and saw to it that of one sort or another there was enough to go around. The wages were low, to be sure, being watered, as it were, to make something for all, but there was enough to keep the wolf from the door by economy and painstaking.

The house-mothers tried to be content with their small supply of fresh vegetables, and little or no fruit, with meat twice a week. As to butter, they had ceased to mention that, but there was a bit of blue milk for the babies who had survived.

"We've got a good deal to be thankful for," Mrs. Stubbs said to Amanda Stout. "The children have all got shoes, though I don't know where they come from; and the chapel kitchen's good for one square meal a week for us all, so

Paul Silver says, if we trust in God. I don't know how we can help trusting in God, now we've tried trusting him. Three families have promised me their washing for the winter, and I hope they won't be too saving of the clothes. I'm thankful for what prospects I've got."

"They tell us we are going to have a big spread in the chapel for Thanksgiving," Amanda said. "I don't know what Deep Gutter'd do without Colonel Wheeler and Mr. Slocumb. They don't make themselves mean or overbearing in the way they do for us. You can see they do it because they like to, and would be lost if they couldn't. Don't we all love the sight of them jolly old souls! They laugh till their sides shake, sometimes, just as if they never had such fun in all their lives as they get down here in Deep Gutter. Oh, we're in luck, we are!" And Amanda laughed, her red face aglow with something that beamed from within.

Thanksgiving Day was dreary enough. The clouds hung low, but no storm was on the inhabitants of Deep Gutter yet. Up-town, in the elegant homes, there was to be wasted enough to have supplied all this poor neighborhood; but Deep Gutter people were not thinking hard thoughts of the rich to-day, nor grumbling because they had so little and the rich so much. They were learning the lesson of patience and of kindly thoughts, "even of the poor rich folks," as Amanda Stout said. It didn't pay to make themselves more miserable yet with complaining. Not that they were really miserable to-day; only the superficial observer might have thought them so, looking at the limited supply of coal in the bins, and the

few clothes and pinched outlook for the long, long winter.

The chapel was overflowing with its familiar number of men and women and children and babies. The fire burned briskly and the leaden sky outside cast no shadow on a crowd of hearts which were learning to trust God, and to take him at his word, and to look forward to better times of his own make, they to join in the bringing about of the better times.

There were present, besides the proper residents of Deep Gutter, Colonel Wheeler and his thin-chested son, the latter reflecting something of his father's serene look and purpose; Alfred Slocomb, Esq., with his adopted son John, cripple still, but with a look of intelligent purpose in his well-featured face. And there was Delia, Slocomb's Christian cook, who had somehow found herself interested in the chapel work, bringing of course Mary Mooney, her aid and pupil. And there, too, was Alfred Slocomb's typewriter, who was often now at the chapel with her friend, Faith Silent. And there were three or four of the sleigh-ride party who had dropped in one evening the preceding winter at a Conversation Meeting, and who had continued to drop in, neglecting such things as their still fashionable friends found great pleasure in. And of course there was Paul Silver, superintendent, or king, or noble, or philosopher, or whatever he might be called by those humble hearts that loved him. And there were his co-workers, William Christy and John Silent, the latter "just over on a visit from Crab Apple Center."

After there had been music suitable for

the day, both of cheery and serious type, and prayer having been offered by John Silent, Paul Silver preached the sermon. It was not a set discourse, only a little talk such as he was wont to make to these people, his heart being full of the love of God.

"My dear friends," he said, "Jesus Christ came into the world on purpose to make one grand thanksgiving. That especial day has not come yet, but we are speeding towards it. We are holding these little thanksgivings as we pass along, that we may keep in mind the better one to come, when all want and cold and foreboding and wrong shall be things of the past, to be forgotten. You have made long strides towards that day, my friends of Deep Gutter, since we met. You have put away from you evil speaking, and malice, and bitterness at your lot — a good deal of it. Some of us can improve along that line yet, but we are making good headway. And we have found that the peace of God is better than malice toward those we have envied. It needs no words of mine to make you see that the character of the inhabitants of Deep Gutter has changed. And it needs no words of mine to have you know that the character of some of the people who do not live in Deep Gutter has changed."

Here Colonel Wheeler gave Alfred Slocomb a meaning glance from under his thick brows, and Cripple Johnnie gave his adopted father such a look of real affection as set that gentleman to longing that he might adopt all the boys in that neighborhood.

The speaker went on: "This love which our dear Lord prayed might be in

all his people for one another — all his people, whether rich or poor, cultured or uncultured — is only a little preparation which he knew would work like a charm in making people happy the world over. There is enough of it to go around, if every one claims a share. People have been turning the cold shoulder towards Christ and one another long enough. Cold shoulders are poor means of warming and comforting the world. The poor are just as guilty as the rich in this matter. They have been turning the cold shoulder towards others long enough, and wishing all the time that the warm side of something might be theirs in return. The poor, no less than the rich, reap what they sow. Thanksgiving is a good day in which to turn the leaf completely over and begin a fresh page of daily record, love and charity and unselfish thoughts being the head-lines in the diary.

“If we love the Lord Jesus Christ as we might, if we knew him better — and it is possible to know him better — we shall find love growing great in our hearts; so great that the room will be all taken up by it. And yet, strange to say, in some hearts there is no love. I read a little story the other day which is so striking I will repeat what I can of it to the young folks of Deep Gutter, that they may understand the love of Jesus better, and how some of us have come to feel that we must spend a large part of our lives teaching people about that love; and how that love is rejected by a few, until the heart of Jesus has been broken again and again.

“There was once a little child — a baby — asleep in its cradle. The mother was in the garden near by, but not in the

house. All at once she saw that the house was in flames. The room where the baby was sleeping was in a red glow and the fire was very hot. The mother held her breath and saved her child, she thinking not of herself, but only of the child. When the fire was all out and friends came to look, they found the face of the mother all scarred and burned, and the neck standing out in great blisters. But the baby's life was saved and the baby was not scarred. The friends thought, ‘Surely when this child grows up she will love the mother who endured so much to save her. She will never cease to love and cherish her, loving her for the scars and her wounded hands and neck.’ By and by when the baby had grown to be a happy girl, she noticed the scars and the misshapen hands and neck, and she wished that her mother would be out of sight when her young friends came, that they might not know she was her mother.

“One dreadful day the girl was walking with a friend on the city street, and they saw a woman on the opposite side all marred and pitiful to look upon, and the friend said to the daughter, ‘Do you know who that wretched woman can be?’ And the daughter, ashamed of the one who had saved her, exclaimed, ‘No, I do not know her; let us hurry on.’ And she laughed.

“My friends, the world, the beautiful daughter of God, has been disowning her Savior for long, long, long.”

There were sobs in the chapel, and then silence. Then more than one present who had never confessed the One who had come to save them, arose, and, with streaming eyes, told these friends of a

new thought in their hearts. Some of these were in cast-off clothing of the rich, who had given what they did not need just to get the old garments out of the way, they not knowing the clothes were to adorn the bodies of saints. Some were in cheap finery of their own purchasing, they supposing the cheap finery would put them on a level with the rich. And two were from Mansion Avenue, daughters of the elegantly-housed and fed, who had come from time to time since that first sleigh-ride for "entertainment," and, though they did not know it, for a new experience at last. It was a Thanksgiving day long to be remembered.

Just as they were singing "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow," there was the tramp of horses' feet down the street, a clattering of heavy farm-wagons, a stopping at the door of the chapel, and when the astonished congregation looked to see, their eyes met the revelation of a lifetime.

"Whoa! haw!" sang out Samuel Varney, leader of the van; and "Whoa! haw!" echoed Josiah Small; and "Whoa! haw!" down the line of weighted wagons circling around the chapel. There were Timothy Meader, and Ira Coombs, and several of the big boys, each with a wagon.

Besides the drivers on the high seats of the vehicles, shivering with cold on account of the long drive under the leaden sky, were the wives and daughters of these, and many more. And the wagons — what did they contain? There were tons and tons of potatoes and beets and cabbages and turnips and apples and corn and pumpkins and squashes, and cans of milk, and jars of butter, and live

poultry and dressed poultry, and a fat porker or two, and everything that grows on farms so plentifully that the markets burst with trying to hold it all. What did Samuel Varney care that his "Whoa! haw!" had disturbed the services? These wagons and their occupants and the freight they carried were part and parcel of the services which it had been revealed to these simple farmers were also a portion of the gospel of Jesus.

The women and girls clambered down from their lofty seats, and were greeted with such a welcome as comes seldom in a lifetime. They were literally borne in to the blazing fires, while the drivers, together with the male part of the congregation, disposed of the freight, for it bade fair to be a "cold snap" before morning, and the Deep Gutter chapel cellars were wide and warm. These cellars had been constructed that they might be convenient for just such stores.

When all had been stored away, and the horses had been housed in barns on the next street, enough cooked dainties, including those prepared beforehand by the neighborhood for the Chapel Thanksgiving, were brought into the great room, and a meal was eaten such as no up-town Thanksgiving spread could equal. For in this was love, that mint, or sauce, or flavor, without which all the dinners of the universe are stale and insufficient.

When they were done, Paul Silver said, "My dear friends, God works miracles, but he seldom works them alone. The bearers of the feast must first fill the water-pots, the disciples must find the boy with the loaves and fishes, and Peter must take the fish out of the water. God has

been doing miracles in Deep Gutter and Crab Apple Center in hearts that were ready, the hearts being made subject to willing hands. It matters not whether our dear, aged friend, Jeremiah Varney, has been paying a visit to his folks, and God's folks, in Crab Apple Center, or whether our young friend, John Silent, has been preaching sermons there. God himself has been working miracles, and here is one of them."

Josiah Small was observed to hitch at his suspenders, and pull at his scanty chin whiskers, as if he must give voice to his feelings without waiting, if Paul Silver did not take the hint. But Paul Silver took the hint, he all the time having a thought of what would come after him. Josiah stood up and smiled the broadest smile that ever cut across the face of a farmer. He said: "My dear friends, I ain't acquainted with anybody here by name, but only by hearsay, as it were. But I feel for ye. It seems as if you must be my own flesh-and-blood, the way you've been brought nigh to me the last few weeks. It seems as if God had been saying to me, 'Here, Josiah Small, you poor, narrow-minded farmer, here are lots of your relations, and mine, down in the city slums, that you never knew anything about yet. Time you was gettin' acquainted.' I'll tell you the whole story in as few words as I can, for I ain't used to speakin' in meetin'. But I have to now, owin' to certain feelin's in here or thereabouts."

Josiah pressed his hard, knuckly hand over the region of the stomach, no doubt thinking he was pointing to his heart, but he missed that organ by four inches.

"You see, we farmers in Crab Apple Center have been a grumblin' lot for years. We complained about the markets and the middle-men, never takin' into account that there was an All-powerful Middle-man who could take us out of the rut if we'd let Him. And we got so we hated city folks, callin' of 'em names, and we deserved the character we've gone by all over the country, owin' to our selfish ways of lookin' at things. Mean, unthankful, grumblin' lot we was! But, God's name be praised! we're gettin' out of the woods now. He sent us a preacher. What induced him ever to come to our section, I don't know; but he said he was 'sent.' Well, John Silent began to preach pointed sermons to us, sermons with such sharp points that we was pricked into bein' sore, as it were. And then Samuel Varney, he instituted Grumblers' Meetin's which we all went to, not havin' anythin' else to go to. And Samuel, he said he guessed the Lord had plans of his own about us; and he had the audacity last spring to say right out that he hoped there'd be bigger crops than ever this fall, and just as poor markets, so the Lord 'd have a chance to teach us farmers a lesson. He said he hoped the time would come when the markets would be the Lord's. And we've learnt our lesson, ain't we, Ira?"

"Yes, we've learnt it!" exclaimed Ira Coombs, unable longer to keep his seat. "We despise ourselves, we farmers of Crab Apple Center. It's true, what Josiah's been sayin'. We are a grumblin' lot, we farmers. And to-day, it bein' Thanksgivin' in these United States of Americy, we thought we'd turn over a new

leaf and sort o' redeem ourselves in the eyes of the world. We've brought you all this truck that there don't seem to be any other market for, bless the Lord! and it's only a beginnin', I can tell you on behalf of the rest. As long as God gives us crops, just so long there sha'n't no more go to waste for want of a market. The farms belong to God, and by his grace the markets shall be his, sha'n't they, neighbors?"

There was a loud vocal assent from the Crab Apple delegates, and a rousing response of gratitude from Deep Gutter recipients. And then Samuel Varney said: "My dear friends of whatever name and station, God has called me to be a farmer, the same as he has called some of you to be house-builders and brick-layers and day-laborers of whatever sort, besides washerwomen and dress-makers, and housewives without very much to keep house with. For the rest of my life I'm goin' to serve God, and not grumble."

"And I!" And I!" came from all over the house.

And then O'Shay, the ten-cent-restaurant keeper, was noticed to be blowing his good-sized nose with great vigor, and to choke with certain guttural sounds peculiar to conditions of mind like his. Eyes began to turn his way, and Paul Silver laid a kind hand on his shoulder.

"Mr. O'Shay," he said, "can we help you any?"

"No," O'Shay replied, "I don't know's you can help me much. It's only this:

I've been a good-for-nothing all my life. I've pocketed the nickels and dimes, and made my pies and cakes and bread without much thought of other folks or of Jesus Christ. I've been interested in Deep Gutter chapel work because it was good for my business, but I've been a failure when it comes to doing anything for other folks when it means something that hasn't any price to it. I'm a most miserable man, but I'm glad I've lived to see this day."

"And I'm glad I lived to see this day!" came from Colonel Wheeler's son, the same young man who, once on a time, had been exhorted to "honor his ancestors." "I am younger than some of you, but I can do a little more perhaps in the long run than if I were older. I am glad I have heard of the mysterious thing that makes new creatures of people. Sorry creatures we all are until we are made new. I have friends in the fashionable circles up-town who would consent to being made new creatures this moment, if they could see it as I do."

While his thin-chested but large-hearted son was saying this, the tears were streaming down the Colonel's cheeks, and he fell upon his knees, repeating the very words of the clergyman the day he had had that never-to-be-forgotten interview with his Ancestors: "We thank thee, Oh, Father, that we have thee for our Ancestor, and that all nations are coming to thee, seeking thee, asking for thee, longing for thee. Amen."

